Spiritual Heroes

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A STUDY OF SOME OF THE WORLD'S PROPHETS

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Sic vos non vobis . . .

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PREFACE

THE following studies of the life and work of some of the foremost prophets of humanity down to the dawn of the modern age are offered to the public with a twofold purpose.

The first is to contribute, by however small an offering, to the spread of that inspiring doctrine of man's spiritual royalty, which is declaring itself ever more clearly in the interplay of the complex forces of our contemporary intellectual and moral life; namely, a philosophy which recognizes the primacy of the human will, sound historical criticism, sympathetic study of comparative religion, etc.

The second purpose, resulting as a corollary from the first, is to emphasize the glorious truth that righteousness of character, humaneness of heart, responsibility toward duty, and obedience to the call of conviction are the primal eternal virtues whose worth is independent of race, age, or creed, and whose blessing is given to all the world.

Our contemporary religious world is moving rapidly, and almost every step taken is in the direction of "sweet reasonableness" in matters of doctrine which divided our fathers into hostile sects. We have sympathetically studied the wonderful systems of religion and morals by whose precepts millions of men shaped their lives in the remote ages of antiquity; and the virtues of the "God-fearing heathen" are now before our eyes to plead forevermore against the vain conceit which would preëmpt for one age, one people, one religion, or one sect the gift and fruits of the Spirit of God.

If history is, as the German philosopher Hegel so finely declared that it is, "the progress of mankind in the consciousness of freedom," then those men are the world's heroes *par excellence* whose task has been the emancipation of the human spirit. They have set a new moral goal for humanity because they have heard and heeded the mighty commission of conscience. They have assumed the spiritual debts of a bankrupt worship, and have restored the credit of religion in all ages. The spirit of these men is the touchstone of freedom, — political, intel-

lectual, moral, religious freedom. They are the links in the chain which binds us to the Eternal Spirit. They are our everlasting examples of manhood.

Yet we can never by searching quite reach the inmost shrine, the *adytum* of truth in any man's soul. The pure white light of the sun is broken up, on entering the prism, into various colours; and by the utmost ingenuity of mechanics those seven colours cannot be recombined into the same unmixed whiteness that was broken up to make them. So does the unsearchable soul of a man enter into the world, manifesting itself through our social institutions in various hues of politics, art, religion, etc. But no combination of these manifestations in history or biography can ever give us back the pure white light of the spirit which gave itself to the world in service. Here we stand in the presence of a mystery, — and let us stand reverently, for the place is holy ground.

A word on the choice of subjects for the following chapters. Apparently to select from the world's spiritual heroes nine men who shall

represent the progress of the idea of freedom (*i.e.* shall represent history) down to the Reformation is no simple task. And yet the task is not so hard as might be supposed. The English philosopher, Thomas Green, in his Introduction to Hume's famous "Essay on the Human Understanding," says that of all the thousands of philosophers of the world the men who have truly advanced philosophy may be counted on the fingers of one hand. Even if this statement is an exaggeration, it is almost true. And it is almost true likewise that the men who have truly advanced the human race in the idea of spiritual freedom may be counted on the fingers of both hands. For we may sum up under a very few rubrics the main influences in the world's spiritual development: the Hebrew prophets, the Indian mystics, the Greek thinkers, the Roman organizers, the Christian apostles, the Moslem scientists, the mediæval preachers, the modern reformers and philosophers. And, more than that, we can generally find some man in each of the groups who is so far representative as to stand for the whole movement. Such a purpose has been regarded in the selections of the names

of Jeremiah, the Buddha, Socrates, Jesus, St. Paul, Marcus Aurelius, Augustine, Mohammed, and Martin Luther.

Since the nature of the volume in hand is popular rather than scientific, the author has adopted the form of the essay, seeking to clothe therewith the results of the newer scholarship. It has seemed best, therefore, to keep the pages free from continual references and foot-notes. The book is sent out as a stimulus to the study of the spiritual evolution of humanity; it accomplishes its purposes, therefore, if it presents a sympathetic picture of a few of the great servants of mankind

> "Who from their graves watch by how slow degrees
> The world-soul broadens with the centuries."

D. S. M.

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CHAPTER I

JEREMIAH, THE PROPHET OF ISRAEL

"Nor did I reckon thine august decree
Of so much force that mortals for its sake
Should dare transgress the unwritten laws of God,
Those laws unfailing, immemorial,
Immortal. . . ." — SOPHOCLES.

THE parent civilization of the world has been sought by scholars in vain. Like the shores of Italy before the ships of Æneas's eager comrades, it is ever receding with tantalizing mysteriousness. But whether the primitive culture of man is to be assigned to the valley of the Nile or to the rich midlands between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, we are met at the dawn of consecutive history — *i.e.* not earlier than the year 1000 B.C. — with three distinct types of the offspring of that primitive culture; viz. the material type, the intellectual type, and the spiritual type. As a representative of the material type we have the Phœnicians or Canaanites, on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, a people of wide commercial connections, whose bold sailors had already passed the Pillars of Hercules to the shores of Portugal, and perhaps

even to Britain. Greece woke to its gifts of grace and intellect soon after in the immortal lays of Homer. And finally the children of Israel, delivered from Egyptian bondage and united under a king, began, under the unremitting stimulus of the prophets, to cultivate the worship of a God of righteousness and justice. The industry of the Phœnicians, the intellect of the Greeks, and the conscience of the Hebrews were the chief factors of world culture until the days when Rome began to extend her levelling influence over all the earth. It is to the last of these factors — the conscience of Israel — that we turn our attention now, and, in particular, to the prophets. For if the Hebrew people have taught the world the sublime lesson of the moral responsibility and the moral dignity of man, it has been, not through their priests and Levites, nor through their kings, Solomon and David, but through Elijah and Amos, Hosea, Micah, Isaiah, and Jeremiah — those dauntless and inflexible preachers of the everlasting and unconditional validity of God's holy law of righteousness.

I

To appreciate the life and service of any one of these prophets, we must understand two things: first, the nature of Hebrew prophecy, and second, the history of the times in which the

prophet in question lived. Let us turn to these two questions. First, the nature of Hebrew prophecy.

It is a common rule of rhetoric that the more extensive the use of a word, the more intensive must be its definition in specific cases. For example, such words as *king*, *constitution*, *priest*, used to denote widespread objects and varying functions, must be restricted by clear historic definition. The word *priest* will mean vastly different things used in connection with Solomon's temple at Jerusalem, the shrine of Apollo at Delphi, and a mediæval Roman cathedral. Altars, as well as thrones, have their histories, and liturgies, as well as laws, their evolution. Now *prophet* is one of those extensive words. Elijah the prophet confronts King Ahab of Israel, saying, "Thou and thy father's house have troubled Israel by forsaking the commandments of the Lord!" Solon, the great lawgiver, gets Epimenides the prophet to come from Crete to purify the city of Athens from the curse of a murderous family. The prophets of the early Christian Church in Asia Minor sang in wild lyrics of the near destruction of the world, and the descent of the New Jerusalem out of heaven. The Irvingites "prophesy" when they talk unintelligible jargon in the intoxication of the spirit, and the clerk of the weather bureau "prophesies" when he

forecasts a storm. Obviously it is a question of wide moment whether the business of a prophet is to rebuke kings or to predict storms, to purge sacred sites or to talk with foaming lips in dithyrambic riddles. Now Hebrew prophecy in the different stages of its development had something of all these elements in it: injunction, prediction, divination, ecstasy; yet in its classical period (from Amos to Ezekiel) it was something far more dignified and reasonable than all these.

When first there were prophets in Israel we do not know. Appeal to certain men to discover the future or interpret the present by clairvoyance and magic is probably as old as a people itself. At any rate, when we do meet with the prophets in Hebrew history they are already organized in schools or guilds like the bands of dervishes in Constantinople and Cairo. And like the dervishes they resorted to the most curious devices for nurturing their fanatic spirit. They "whirled" and "howled" to the sound of harps, working themselves up into a transport of frenzy; they lay on the ground and writhed; they cut themselves as the Persian zealots do to this day in their feast of the tenth month, and in their exultation they felt no pain. They usually frequented the holy places, and were to be distinguished by their wild looks and queer

clothing. Even through the era of Israel's highest civilization and down to the exile of Judah the prophets preserved traits of this bizarre enthusiasm. Isaiah eschewed clothing for three years (Is. 22 : 21); Jeremiah appeared in the streets of the capital with a wooden yoke on his neck, saying, "Thus shall Judah's neck be bent under bondage to the Babylonian" (Jer. 27 : 2 ff.); Zedekiah came to King Ahab, wearing horns of iron like a steer, and saying, "Thus shalt thou push the Syrians" (I K. 22 : 11). The prophet was called mad because he acted like a madman. Elisha dashed in on the gruff captain, Jehu, in his camp and broke a viol of oil on his head, saying, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I have made thee king over the people of the Lord"; then he opened the door and fled. No wonder the officers outside received Jehu with the amazed question, "Whence came this mad fellow to thee?" (II K. 9 : 11).

Besides delivering their religious and political messages, the early prophets of Israel were also soothsayers and magicians. The same man that hurled a ruler from his throne by the voice of God could be employed for a few pennies to give advice on the most trivial affairs of daily life,—finding a lost cow, healing a lovers' quarrel, curing a lame horse, etc. That supernatural power was attributed to the prophets is shown

not only by the miracles ascribed to them (*e.g.* II K. 6 : 5), but by the general atmosphere of fable that hangs about them. They are heroic figures like the demigods of Greece. Elijah is a Hebrew Herculas; he journeys through the land attended by wonders and signs. Ravens feed him with bread from heaven; while he is in the house of the widow of Zarephath her meal chest and oil bottle remain full without replenishment; he stretches himself on the body of a dead boy, and behold the child lives; his word brings down fire from heaven to consume not only the sacrificial bullocks, but the water in the trench about the altar even, at Carmel; he outruns the swift horses of the king of Israel and comes to Jezreel before him. In a word, the early prophets of Israel differed in nowise from the early prophets of Israel's Semitic neighbours. They formed a guild, and plied their business of soothsaying and divination just as settlements of gypsies do to-day. They lived by their wits.

But not long after the glorious reign of King Solomon there came to Israel a new sort of prophet. The land had grown fat and prospered, but with prosperity had come also a woful relaxation in singleness of devotion to Israel's God Jahveh (Jehovah), the God who had led them up out of Egypt and across the wilderness and Jordan into the fair land of Canaan. An

era of literary activity had opened: the songs of the nation began to be collected; the history of the nation began to be written. But with increase of culture came also the curse of luxury. Not only were the gods of Canaan openly worshipped in Samaria, but the social order of old Israel was utterly corrupted. The great nobles were no longer farmers, as they had been in the days of King Saul. The country had shifted its capital from an agricultural to a commercial basis under the influence of the Canaanite, and was ripe for the social upheaval which always attends such a revolution. Witness the Rome of the Gracchi, Athens under Solon, and the peasant wars of the sixteenth century. Furthermore an enemy appeared in the east. The great Assyrian monarchy, with its capital at Nineveh on the Tigris, began to conquer westward. Already the Assyrian king Shalmaneser II had conducted a series of campaigns against Israel's nearest neighbour in the north, Damascus. The inevitable moment had come when Israel was to be drawn, willy-nilly, into the stream of world politics.

The Assyrian war cloud of the eighth century B.C. formed the background against which the sins of Israel's brilliant culture shone lurid and ominous. It was then that a new kind of prophecy arose: a prophecy which searched the

heart and conscience of Israel, a revival of the stern, nomad puritanism of the desert. In the gay capital of Israel they "reclined on ivory couches and ate the calves of the midst of the stall"; they sang to the sound of the viol and drank wine in bowls; while they squeezed usury out of the debtor and "sold the poor for a pair of shoes." Jahveh, the God who had led Israel up out of Egypt, was forgotten in the press of foreign gods; and everybody in that loose frivolous régime was welcome, according to the sneering invitation of Frederick the Great, "to be saved in any way he pleased." The new prophets cried Halt! to this immoral, religious indifference. Israel *must* return to the single service of Jahveh, its God. They threatened the idolatrous people with destruction at the hands of the grim, lowering kingdom of Assyria. They besought the king and the people to remember that Jahveh was greater than all the gods of the nations, and that he would last even if Israel rushed to its own ruin — for he was eternal righteousness.

This is the tremendous significance of the race of Hebrew prophets that opened with Amos the shepherd of Tekoa: they declared a God who was righteousness alone, and they elevated that God above any slightest dependence on Israel. Not Jahveh was bound up in Israel, but Israel

was bound up in Jahveh. He did not need them —was he not God of the whole earth? But they needed him. Wonderful idea to be born out of the Palestinian desert! Religion sprung full grown from the heart of a shepherd prophet! The whole philosophy of the Israelite turned upside down: his God changed from a blind patron to an impartial judge; his sacrifices from meritorious rites to meaningless abominations; nay, his very nation no longer the guardian of Jahveh through good or evil, but only the servant of Jahveh, to be used if faithful, to be rejected if sinful. Here is *the* epoch in the religious history of the world: the birth of ethical monotheism, the substitution of conscience for ceremony, of righteousness for ritual, of moral responsibility to the ruler of the universe for priest-purchased intimacy with a tribal god. Till this time religion had been superstition, and God a fetich. It is twenty-six hundred years since Amos broke in upon the revellers at Beth-el and dashed the security of their formal orthodoxy with a message from a God who cared not for sacrifices so long as the poor were oppressed, and who hated their Sabbath so long as unrighteousness reigned on week days. In these twenty-six hundred years many a prophet greater than Amos has arisen to declare that God is truly worshipped neither in Samaria nor in Jerusalem,

neither on Gerizim nor on Zion, but only in spirit and in truth — and yet for the great multitude God is still a fetich and religion only superstition. In another two millenniums and a half shall we have risen to the religion preached by Amos, where the poor are not sold for a pair of shoes, and the rich do not sigh for the Sabbath to be past that they may sell wheat (Amos 8:5)? God knows. Only this we may say: the greatness of a man's soul may be measured by the centuries it takes for his ideas to come to fruition.

Let me briefly enumerate the marks of the new prophecy in Israel. First it was ethical. Prophecy and priesthood had run in closely parallel streams in ancient Israel; but when Amos cried in the name of a righteous God, "I hate and despise your feasts, and will not smell your holy offerings" (cf. Is. 1:11; Mic. 6:6), prophet and priest parted company, not to be reunited till two centuries later in the prophet priest Ezekiel. Secondly, the new prophecy was inflexibly rigid in its morality. It left behind it those wild guilds of purchasable ravers who cultivated the oracle for a business, as the "belated representatives of an earlier stage of development in Israel's consciousness." Thirdly, it was committed to writing and not left to the uncertain fortunes of oral tradition. A political

reason may have played a part in this, but we cannot doubt that the prophets from Amos down committed their sermons to writing principally because they felt that the truth in them was permanent. It was not a prophecy for the moment. The people would not listen; very well, the prophecy was set down as an everlasting witness against the people, — that people whose eyes were blind and whose ears were stopped. Lastly, the new prophecy was national (later, even universal) in its significance. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah were not men who for a few pence gave directions for the planting of a field or the finding of a cow. They were busy with great themes: the life of the king and the salvation of the people. Ethics and politics were merged into a unity for them, and that unity was the will of a righteous Jahveh. They did not wait to be hired before they spoke: they could not be bought with money *not* to speak. They had but one trait in common with the dervish prophets of early Israel, and that was enthusiasm.

It was to this later race of Hebrew prophets that Jeremiah belonged. But before we take up his life and work, we must turn our attention to the second point necessary for the appreciation of the prophet, viz. the history of the time in which he lived.

II

The Assyrian armies had swept over the west in a tidal wave of conquest. In 732 Damascus, the capital of Syria, had fallen before Tiglath-pileser, and ten years later (722) Israel was carried captive to Nineveh, even as Amos and Hosea had predicted. In 701 Sennacherib's host had encamped before the sacred walls of Jerusalem; but the Egyptian advanced, and the holy city was relieved. Still, how had the pride of the Hebrews fallen! Within a single generation the northern kingdom led away into captivity, and the capital of Judah beleaguered by heathen hosts! The face of the East was changed. The small kingdoms near the Mediterranean shore were broken up and became vassals to the kings of Assyria. The seventh century opened with disgrace for Judah: the kings of the house of David were still allowed to sit on the throne, to be sure, but they had to pay tribute to the conqueror at Nineveh. Hezekiah was king of Judah in 700, and Isaiah, the great balance wheel of the nation, was at his right hand. In penitence and true piety King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah set to work to reform the polluted worship of Jahveh, but the effort was short-lived. Hezekiah and Isaiah passed off the scene together before the century

was fifteen years old; and there came a king who for fifty-two years so forgot the high ideal of Hebrew piety that his name passed to history as the man for whose sins Zion was laid waste and the people led into exile by the rivers of Babylon. Manasseh "built up again the high places which his father Hezekiah had destroyed and reared altars for Baal . . . and built altars for all the host of heaven . . . and made his sons pass through the fire, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards" (II K. 21), which means that Manasseh revived the worship of Phœnicia and Moab in Judah, and imported the polytheism of Assyria in the shape of the worship of the host of heaven, *i.e.* the stars and planets. And the women sacrificed to the Queen of Heaven, as they boasted fifty years later, in their exile in Egypt (Jer. 44:7). Material prosperity went along with this moral degradation of Judah during the seventh century. The wicked court of Manasseh aped the godless fashions of the Assyrian in Nineveh, and ate their bread in fatness like the Stuarts of the Restoration under the patronage of "le grand monarque."

But the excesses of Manasseh prepared the people for a reversal of policy. His young son Josiah, who succeeded him in 638, was in complete sympathy, perhaps in direct personal af-

filiation, with the slender but faithful minority, who longed for the restoration of the pure worship of Jahveh. So under Josiah the most thorough-going religious reform in all Judah's history was inaugurated. The unfinished work of Hezekiah was taken up and put through with vigour. The idolatrous shrines were broken down. The priesthood was limited strictly to the Levitical family, and Jerusalem was made the exclusive sanctuary of the nation. The oracles of the nation were collected and worked over in a form which gave permanence to the labours of the prophets before Manasseh's disastrous reign. By a pious ruse this collection of laws was recommended to the people as a work of Moses; it was given out that Hilkiah the priest had found the book in a corner of the temple, while the carpenters were making repairs. Josiah gladly lent the force of his kingly authority to the promulgation of this "Mosaic" law code (which is our biblical book of Deuteronomy), and under its clear, practical programme the worship of Jahveh bade fair to be restored to purity. But just at this critical point an event happened which stunned the senses of the reformers — all save one — and resulted in ten years in the downfall of the nation. That event, the most tragic in Hebrew history, was the death of the good king Josiah.

The Assyrian Empire, "whose name for three centuries had been written in blood on nearly every page of Semitic history," was tottering to its fall. Neco, king of Egypt, went up through Palestine with his armies to grasp what he could get in the break-up of Assyria. As Neco crossed the northern plains of Israel, Josiah went out to meet him, though the Pharaoh declared that his quarrel was not with Judah but with Assyria. But Josiah was confident in his righteousness. Like Sir Galahad's, his "strength was like the strength of ten because his heart was pure." The hosts of Egypt should not be allowed to set foot on the holy ground of Israel, even in passing, so long as he, the servant of all-powerful Jahveh, was king in Jerusalem. So the righteously deluded king met the Pharaoh on the battle-field of Megiddo, and paid for his faith with his life. Josiah's army was routed, and Judah became a vassal of Egypt, to change masters five years later when Neco was defeated at Carchemish on the Euphrates by the great king Nebuchadrezzar, of the Chaldees, heir of the fallen kingdom of Assyria. The battle of Carchemish was in 604.

Josiah's son and successor, Jehoiakim, was a weak, vain-glorious, treacherous, heathenish person, who squandered on his own profligate court the revenues which should have paid his tribute

to Nebuchadrezzar, and coquetted with Egypt till he brought down the wrath of his Babylonian lord upon him. He died in 598, just in time to avoid punishment; for in that same year Nebuchadrezzar stormed the rebellious city of Jerusalem, and carried away a number of the nobles (including Jehoiakim's eighteen-year-old son) to Babylon. He appointed a brother of Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, as vassal king over the city. But the same story repeated itself under Zedekiah. Though the latter ruler was more conscientious and sober than his predecessor, still he could not make head against the party of nobles, who were forever urging revolt from Babylon and relying upon Egypt for succour. The crisis came in 587. Judah threw off allegiance to Babylon. Nebuchadrezzar hesitated not an instant; he moved his armies against Jerusalem, and after a stubborn siege of several months, he broke down the walls of the city, laid in ashes the temple, removed the majority of the people to Babylon, and put an end to the political existence of Judah. The final captivity was in the year 586.

III

The one man in Judah whose faith had not been shattered by the disaster at Megiddo was Jeremiah. When others cried, "Jahveh is

blind: Manasseh flouted him and reigned above fifty years; Josiah served him and fell in the prime of manhood," Jeremiah answered: "Jahveh hath no need either of Manasseh or of Josiah. It is Judah that needs Jahveh through adversity or prosperity." When they pointed to the Book of the Law and pleaded the reforms of the priesthood and the renewal of the sacrifices, Jeremiah answered, "Did Jahveh speak of sacrifices when he led his people up out of Egypt? did he not rather say, 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people'" (Jer. 7:22)? No, Judah's sin was greater than the neglect of Jahveh's altars; it was the violation of his holy will. Her wound was incurable. "It is difficult to conceive," says Lord Macaulay, "a situation more painful than that of a great man condemned to watch the lingering agony of an exhausted country; to tend it during the alternate fits of stupefaction and raving which precede its dissolution, and to see the symptoms of vitality disappear one by one, till nothing is left but coldness, darkness, and corruption." This inheritance of bitterness and woe fell to the lot of the prophet Jeremiah, — the most reviled and persecuted, yet the tenderest and most deeply religious of all the prophets of Israel, truly "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

He was born of a priestly family, in the latter years of the godless king Manasseh, in the little village of Anathoth near Jerusalem. He belonged to the reform party of which King Josiah was a member. In the thirteenth year of Josiah (626) the call came to Jeremiah to be "a prophet unto the nations." How the early years of his prophetic activity were spent we do not know. The Scythians, a barbarian horde from near the Black Sea, were threatening Palestine just at that time, and probably Jeremiah made their appearance the text for his threatening sermons. But the Scythians swept on without molesting Judah, only probably injuring the prophet's reputation for truth-telling at the very outset of his career. About five years later Josiah's reform was inaugurated, and, though there is no direct testimony to the fact, some scholars, following Dahlen, have conjectured from the hint in Jer. 11 : 1–8 that the prophet spent the years immediately following (621–609) as an itinerant missionary of the new law in the cities of Judah. Then came the shock of Josiah's violent death at Megiddo (609), and the reversal of policy under his perfidious son Jehoiakim. The enthusiasm of the zealots for Josiah's law died down, and in the graphic words of Wellhausen, "the true Israel was narrowed to one man," the prophet Jere-

miah. *Jeremiah contra mundum!* "Jeremiah against the world." So he felt himself, for the Lord's summons was: "Therefore gird up thy loins and arise and speak, for I have made thee this day a defenced city, even pillars of iron and walls of brass against the whole land, against the kings of Judah and the princes thereof, against the priests thereof and the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee but shall not prevail, for I am with thee to deliver" (1:7–19). They hated him in the country because he preached against their altars, and they hated him in Jerusalem because he stormed against the treacherous alliance with Egypt. The priests hated him because he would interfere with their ill-gotton tithes from the perverted revenues of King Jehoiakim, and the prophets hated him because when they cried, "Peace, peace!" he thundered, "There is no peace" (6:14; 14:13 ff.; 23:25 ff.).

While Jeremiah was in prison by the hatred of the princes, priests, and nobles, word came to him from Jahveh, in the fourth year of King Jehoiakim (605), to write his prophecies (which had covered a space of twenty-two years) in a book. Jeremiah dictated the roll to his secretary Baruch and commanded him to read it to the people in the temple on the next fast day. The priests told the nobles and the nobles told

the king. "Now the king was sitting in his winter house" — so runs the narrative in the thirty-sixth chapter of Jeremiah — "and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him." And when the roll was read to him, King Jehoiakim angrily cut the leaves with his knife and threw them into the fire. So the first book of the prophet Jeremiah was consumed by the flames.

Burning bodies and books has always been one of the favourite ways a shortsighted religious despotism has employed for the bridling of free thought and the suppression of new truth; but the ashes of the dead man and the curling cinders of the blackened page have been the richest fertilizers of the doctrines so persecuted. Jeremiah rewrote the roll, and added, as the account significantly says, "many words besides."

The battle was finally and fairly joined between the prophet and his opponents, — king, priests, and princes. For the remaining twenty years of his and Judah's life, Jeremiah laboured with prayers, threats, denunciation, and entreaty to bring the people back to their allegiance to Jahveh; and he earned for his pains the stocks, the dungeon wherein "he sank in the mire," the opprobrious name of traitor, and finally exile and martyrdom in Egypt — the faithless land against which he had warned his people in vain.

The mission of this great soul of righteousness, strength, and pathos was the most painful mission that can be put upon a man. He was the "son of a martyr church," and the prophet of his nation's downfall. He was the first (and only) of the Old Testament prophets to bear in his own person the whole punishment of his country's sins. His great predecessor Isaiah could still hope for Judah's salvation. There was a pious king in Jerusalem, and the Assyrian seemed satisfied with the capture of the northern kingdom, Israel. Judah had one more chance to become the light of the nations, and Jerusalem might still be the house of prayer to which all people should come. But Judah had lost its one remaining chance when Jeremiah was called to be its prophet. The abominations of Manasseh had filled Jerusalem with idolatrous and brutal dissipation. "The harvest was past, the summer was ended, and they were not saved" (8 : 20). So deep was the degradation of the people that scarce twenty years after the brilliant reform of Josiah, Judah was ready for dissolution. The day foreseen by the prophet Amos had come upon the land, "a day of famine, not of bread or of water, but of the hearing of the word of the Lord" (Amos 8 : 11). And on Jeremiah was put the awful task of telling his people that they were a failure. A new leaven

must leaven the old Israel before she could revive, and that leaven was the leaven of chastisement. The Israel of the flesh (the nation) was dying, and the Israel of the spirit (the Church) was not yet born. In the dark hour between Israel's death and resurrection Jeremiah's life was cast. And in this hour, the hour of Judah's Gethsemane, he alone had the courage to meet the inevitable doom of God's judgment, and he alone had the faith to see afar the morning of Judah's rebirth. Branded as a traitor for his resignation, and jeered at as a fool for his hope, he still kept on his way of warning and reproof until the sacred temple lay a heap of smoking ruins beneath the feet of Nebuchadrezzar's soldiers. Then the prophet was dragged to Egypt by the band of Jews who fled from the Babylonian's wrath; and when he continued there to preach the judgments of Jahveh, he was stoned to death by his own countrymen. So sank this great soul "in God's darkness grandly from out the infinite littleness of men." "In Jeremiah," says Dr. Ewald, the greatest of Israel's historians, "the kingdom lost the most human prophet it ever possessed. His heavy sorrows and despair, his noble yet fruitless struggle, and his fall were those of prophecy itself, and, inasmuch as prophetism constituted the inmost life of the

state, the fall of the state itself. If any pure soul could still have saved the state, that soul was Jeremiah's. But for the noblest even of the prophets the time was past. Prophet and state were engulfed in one common ruin."

IV

We must turn now from the life of Jeremiah to consider what is his significance in the world's pantheon of spiritual heroes; what were the living ideals which he bequeathed to humanity. These I would designate as two; viz. the universality and absoluteness of the moral law, and the responsibility of the individual toward that law without regard to fortune or favour.

We know that every high form of life, spiritual and moral, as well as physical, is the result of a long, painful evolution. It took at least five hundred years for the idea of God in ancient Israel to transcend the limits of tribal interest and become, even in the minds of a few leaders, a universal term; but that it did transcend those limits is why Israel lives to-day, while the other nations, Edom, Ammon, Moab, etc., with their tribal gods, have long since vanished into the limbo of the non-historic, *i.e.* the non-progressive. It is in Jeremiah that the God of Israel becomes finally the absolute, unconditioned, universal, wholly righteous God of all

flesh. It is in Jeremiah that he is freed from all dependence on, or connection with, sacrifice and offerings. The temple may fall in ruins, sacred Judah may be scattered in exile — still Jahveh lives, no less glorious for his faithless people's fall. The Law of Moses may fail, yet Jahveh will make a new covenant. "After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts and write it on their hearts" (Jer. 31 : 33). With these words we touch the very apex of Hebrew prophecy, the high-water mark of the religion of Israel. Beyond these words, religion can make but one step in advance, and that step it took in Jesus of Nazareth, who declared that the Lord who wrote his law in the inward parts was the loving Father of every child of humanity. The religion of Jeremiah was universal because it was purely moral, wholly ethical. It was not hemmed by any dogma of the priesthood. The temple of Shiloh had been destroyed for Israel's sin, the temple of Jerusalem (though a million times holier) would be just as surely destroyed for Judah's sin. The God of Jeremiah did not accept any performance of ritual whatsoever as a substitute for a clean heart, nor did he regard the proudest sacerdotal lineage as a passport to his favour. Iniquity was iniquity, whether Judah did it or the people whom Judah called

heathen. The responsibility for Judah's blessedness was taken off Jahveh's shoulders and put on the shoulders of the nation itself. If the Hebrew people fell again into the narrowness of particularism and stagnation after the exile, if they again made God the champion of Moses and confined his glory within the temple walls, it was because they forgot such prophets as Jeremiah.

Moreover, because the religion of Jeremiah was universal, it was also individual. If the new law of righteousness was not to be written in the book of the temple, it must be written on the tablets of the heart. Law and conscience became from that time forth one; for it was the majestically righteous conscience of the prophet projected heavenward that was his law, his Jahveh. Jeremiah brought religion from heaven down to earth. The worshipper should no longer consult the priest, who consulted the Law, to find the will of God. He should look into his own heart, and find the law written in his inward parts. And so his soul should become God's temple, his faithful purpose God's law, his faithful performance God's priesthood. When we say that our inheritance from the Hebrew prophets is the ideal of ethical monotheism, we mean that they discovered, through the evolution of their country's spiritual his-

tory, a God who was worshipped not because he was more powerful than Dagon of the Philistines or Baal of the Canaanites, but because he was the eternal, changeless spirit of righteousness. At first a God differing only in degree from the gods of Israel's Semitic neighbours, Jahveh came through the work of the prophets to be a God differing in kind. From being worshipped as an idol he came to be worshipped as an ideal.

Mr. James Darmsteter, probably with the exception of Renan the most brilliant French Orientalist of the nineteenth century, in his essay on the "Religion of the Future," has shown us the way back to the "prophets of Israel, these misunderstood masters of Christianity. . . . In turning to these men humanity is not retrograding twenty-six centuries; it is they who were twenty-six centuries in advance. Humanity was too young to read them."

These are true and noble words of a great thinker and a deeply religious man; they tell, without exaggeration, the debt we owe to the Hebrew prophets, and above all to the greatest of them, the strong-souled Jeremiah. How making earnest with his divine ideal would transform our civilization! how it would reinvigorate conscience! how it would dispel that most baneful of all our religious sophistries that has infested the Church like a canker ever since

the logicians have tampered with religion. I mean the specious reasoning by which ritual and creed have been set above conscience; viz. sin is of two sorts, — sin against God and sin against men: now sin against God is a sin of worship or belief, while sin against man is a sin of word or deed: God is greater than man, hence sin against God is worse than sin against man, etc. And so have arisen all the wars of creed and sect. Compare the imperial Bishop of Constantinople, insisting that three fingers not two shall be raised in benediction, with this grand old prophet of Israel who said, "Let the temple go down and its altars, but let justice be done!" Compare Calvin, with his scorn for the mere "civil virtues" of justice and goodness in comparison with the religious virtue of orthodoxy, with Jeremiah, who declared that righteousness alone is godliness.

The Hebrews have bequeathed to us but little of what we reckon our highest civilization today. They shared with all other Semitic peoples a marked incapacity for stable, political life, the instinct of government, which was Rome's contribution to the world. They lacked the nice sense of harmony and beauty in art, the rhythm of varied verse and the virile grace of architecture: these things are from the Greeks. But one blessing more priceless than the legacy of

Greece and Rome combined have the Hebrews in their prophets bequeathed to us: that is, the consciousness that it is the moral ideal which constitutes the life of a people, and that without this ideal kept faithfully before the eyes of the soul, worship becomes mere mummery, prosperity degenerates into animalism, and the future (to borrow the prophet's simile) "hangs before our eyes in tatters" (Deut. 28:66). "Therefore these ancient words" — again I use the splendid sentence of Darmsteter — "have more vitality at the present time, and answer better to the needs of modern souls, than all the classic masterpieces of antiquity."

V

Jeremiah is not antiquated. He will be fresh, new, vital, vigorous still when most of the poor literature we read to-day shall have been consigned to a merited oblivion. His prophecy is classic literature. One will learn from him the infinite nature of duty and the insatiable claims of conscience. One will discover the huge gulf "forever fixed" between those who receive their inspiration from God and those who get their religion at second hand; and one will realize how there is no possible true fellowship between those who borrow their hope from traditions and majorities, but only between those who create

their hope by lives of faithful thought and deed. One will see the tremendous truth of the Scotchman's assertion, "All power is moral . . . beside the *thou shalt* and the *thou shalt not* there is not an issue of first-class importance in life." That was the doctrine of Jeremiah and the Hebrew prophets. Their immortal contribution to the world was the doctrine of the majesty of ethical piety, the piety of the will. That doctrine, alas! has often been preached in most unlovely, most inhumane form. Puritanism has been the caricature of true Hebraism; and the great critic Matthew Arnold has pleaded for more Hellenism in our life, more of the spirit of sweetness and light as against the sterner virtues of Hebraism. "Sweetness and light" are good, very good; yet I venture to ask, in the name of the world's prophets, which is more needed in our life to-day, and which is the more worthy of our passionate cultivation and single devotion,—sweetness or righteousness, grace or sincerity, charm or conscience.

CHAPTER II

THE BUDDHA, THE PRINCE OF MYSTICISM

> "Speak not of the transient,
> Whatever its sphere;
> To make self eternal,
> Is our task here." — GOETHE.

HISTORICAL as well as physical phenomena are subject to the law of perspective. From the vantage-ground of a long lapse of time we can look back on past centuries and see them in their real and lasting significance. Events which are related cluster together to form epochs, just as the chimneys and church spires cluster in a landscape. An age, like a town, has shape only when viewed from a distance. Historical perspective shows us some ages as epochal, that is, as the expression of new ideals in human life, of richer aggregation and correlation of human powers — to continue the simile: the imposing towns of the landscape time.

The fifteenth century of our era, for example, was such an epoch. Art, literature, religion, statecraft, exploration, science, felt a revival

then which was equivalent to a new birth: we call it the *renaissance.* The modern world came to itself in that age. And the age in which the ancient world came to itself, the pre-Christian renaissance, was the sixth century B.C. It was the time of the break-up of the great stationary Semitic monarchies of the East, — Assyria and Babylon; and of the spread of Aryan Persia from the Indus to the Ægean. It was the era of Judah's captivity, and the transformation, in exile, of the Hebrew nation into the Jewish Church. It was the age of awakened thought and literary beginnings in Greece; the age of Thales, Peisistratus, and Thespis. And finally it was the century which saw, in the remote land of northern India, the birth of the founder of that religion which to-day counts more adherents than any other religion on the face of the globe — Buddhism.

I

We are especially favoured in our study of the religions of India. First, by the great age of the sacred literature of the country. The Vedic hymns, which contain the religious system of the first Aryan settlers in India, date back of the year 1000 B.C., perhaps as far back as 1500 B.C. They are the oldest sacred literature we possess, excepting only some of the Chinese classics. In

the second place, the perfect tolerance which has characterized every form of Indian faith has prevented the destruction of sacred literature in that country. Indian Vedism, Brahmanism, and Buddhism were never concerned to burn books or hunt heretics. And finally the complete isolation of India, social, political, and geographical, from the rest of the civilized world, kept her religions free from foreign elements such as the Babylonian captivity introduced into the religion of the Jews, or Greek philosophy into the religion of Jesus. The Indian faiths are purely a product of the Indian genius. In them the character of the inhabitants and even the climate of the country are clearly mirrored. There is freedom and subtlety of speculation, a great desire for unity and peace, a breadth like the wide river lands, and a spirit of quietism akin to the repose of the transparent sky.

To understand the place of Gautama the Buddha, the supreme figure in the religion of the far east, we must briefly follow the development of the two great phases of Indian faith which preceded the Buddha, and in a sense made the Buddha and Buddhism possible—I mean Vedism and Brahmanism.

When the Aryan tribes (our ancestors, as well as the ancestors of most of the European nations) came down over the high mountains into the

plain watered by the five rivers in the northwest corner of India — the Punjaub, as the district is called in modern geography — they brought with them a religion and a civilization very like that which we meet in the world of the Homeric poems: fresh, vigorous, naturalistic, childlike, optimistic, literal, moral. They worshipped the great powers of nature: Varuna, the limitless expanse of heaven, Agni, the life-giving fire of the sun and the hearth. Every man was a priest in his own house. The present hour, with its delight in the chase and its prayer for increase of family and herds, absorbed all their thought. There was no morbid fear of death, no placating of the gods of Hades. Solicitude for the dim future sat lightly on them, and the speculations of the metaphysician were not allowed to encroach on the immediate enjoyment of their young and vigorous life. The picture of this primitive polytheistic worship is preserved to us in the Vedic hymns above mentioned; and a glimpse of it is accessible to us all now in the translation of these hymns in the "Sacred Books of the East," edited by the late-lamented Max Müller (Vol. 33).

Gradually, under the influence of forces which are not altogether known to us, this simple, direct, unsystematized religion of the Vedas underwent a great change. The people moved

eastward from the highlands about the Indus to the valley of the Ganges. They met various tribes of the dark-skinned natives in war, and in the process of conquest got from them we hardly know what elements of belief and worship to modify their own childlike religion. As they grew old in the possession of the land those features of religion appeared which inevitably mark the change from a wandering and pastoral life to a permanent and agricultural civilization. The distinction between ranks of society grew definite and sharp, resulting in that iron-clad system of caste which characterizes the people of India to this day. The priestly or Brahmanic caste acquired an exclusive moral ascendency over the warrior class and the farmer class; while below these three castes were the Sudras or Plebeians, Pariahs without citizenship, social outcasts, the enslaved remnant of the conquered natives. Again, with the settled life, and the devotion of a special class of the people to theology, there arose elaborate systems of metaphysics, keen speculation, a scheme of mystic sacrifices, and the like. Men's thoughts were directed away from this fleeting life to the great, mysterious future. The childlike life was gone. The naïve worship of heaven, fire, and the soma juice, of the champion Indra and his shining warrior spirits was superseded by an

esoteric, hair-splitting theology. Brahma, the abstraction of priestly enlightenment, was worshipped — Brahma, neither a person nor a thing, but an idea, the idea of permanence and all-pervasiveness. As the salt is through and through the water, as the heat is through the flame, so is Brahma the essence of all things. "No," "no" is his name, for he cannot bear the limitations of definition. The mystic syllable "Om" is his symbol; it means the utter barrenness of abstraction of every quality thinkable. Further, the old hymns of the Vedas, written without a thought of divine inspiration, were canonized into a sacred scripture (the common fate of all primitive religious literature), and about them grew up an interminable mass of written and oral tradition: ritual treatises, commentaries, law books, mythical and legendary histories, Talmuds and Targums, "Mantras," "Brahmanas," "Upanishads." "The Vedas," says Dr. Menzies, "were raised to the rank of divinity; they were said to have to do with the creation of the world, or to have been among the first created things."

As was most natural, this keen spirit of speculation, unchecked by any inquisitorial censorship and undisturbed by persecution, resulted in a varied mass of philosophies, ranging from crass and outspoken materialism on the one

hand to profound religious mysticism on the other. In these Brahmanistic philosophies, as they are brought more and more into the light by Orientalists, we find a surprising maturity and comprehensiveness of thought. The old Brahmans, in their six systems, anticipated Kant, Hegel, La Place, and Darwin. It seems as if they thought thought through to its bitter end, and then, finding it all vanity, sought the rest of eternal absorption in Brahma — the Spencerian "Unknowable."

We have no time, and no need for our present purpose, to enter into a detailed account of these Brahmanist philosophies. We need only note that out of all the numberless theories therein contained, four emerge as the prominent and permanent doctrines of Brahmanism. And these four went over into Buddhism, conditioning the formal and material principles of that latter religion. They are 1st, the doctrine of Samsara, or change. As our bodies are not alike in their particles any two successive moments, so are our souls undergoing constant flux of disposition and content. 2d, the doctrine of Karma, or the persistence of moral energy. All our present deeds condition our common future existence as all past deeds have conditioned our common present existence. Everything tangible or concrete is bound

in the fetters of fatalism, and the only escape for the soul is by the abstraction of passion, desire, affection, and appetite from itself. 3d, the doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls, that is, of the successive rebirth of the soul in forms conditioned by its Karma, until all material elements, all Samsara have been stripped from it, and it is absorbed into the great eternal Brahma whose name is "No," "no." And 4th, this absorption is the doctrine of Nirvana, the negation of Samsara, or change. One sees, the upshot of Brahmanism is dualism and pessimism. Dualism, that is the theory of two eternally warring principles, two selves, a soul within a soul: the outer soul holding to perishable matter and the world of sense, the inner soul (Atman) striving by self-emptying to reach Nirvana; and pessimism, that is the definitive renunciation of all pleasures, hopes, and affections which are implanted in the human breast, and the resigned despair of ever approaching by an infinitesimal degree the solution of the riddle of the universe. The Brahmanist said with the preacher, "Vanitas vanitatum omnia vanitas." He found pain, suffering, blindness, passion, ignorance, superstition all about him, and said, Were it not for existence, these things would not be. Our modern conception of ethics, that life is worth the pains of cleansing from

the defilement of these misused sense-endowments, was incomprehensible to the Indian philosopher in the sunny land where all nature seemed toilless. There was no evidence in the valley of the Ganges of a God that worked, but only of a God that rested. Asceticism, the inevitable result of a pessimistic philosophy, spread widely among the Brahmans: the Yogins, or ascetic monks, gathered into fellowships, which (since monasticism is necessarily democratic) were the entering wedge in the destruction of the caste system.

Such, in barest outline, was the religious state of India about the middle of the first millennium B.C. Brahmanism, essentially an excrescence, with its dominant priesthood, its sacred scriptures, its endless theological speculation, its pessimism, and its asceticism, had entirely superseded the old, naïve polytheism of the Vedas. The land was swarming with sects and divisions of sects; teachers and leaders were offering themselves on every hand; the people were crying "Lo here, lo there!" It was then that there appeared preaching in the neighbourhood of the holy city of Benares the man whose name still stands, after two and a half thousand years, in the hearts of millions in China, Tibet, Ceylon, Japan, Burma, and Siam, as the sacredest name in all history.

II

There is no life of the Buddha in the Buddhist scriptures. A lengendary account of his life, decked out with the stories of a virgin birth attended by the hosts of heaven, and other such mythological additions as are found also in the Christian Gospels, was written in the first century of our era by a certain Avaghosha. And some three centuries later still we have in Pali (the language of southern Buddhism) the Jatakas or Birth Stories, more mythical and fantastic ornament to the great life—comparable perhaps to the Apocryphal Gospels, which the Christian Church refused to admit into its canon of scripture. We are thrown therefore, for our knowledge of the Buddha, on the scanty notices of a personal nature in the great books containing his doctrine. At only two points of the Buddha's life are we in possession of anything like satisfactory biography: 1st, when he comes to preach the Kingdom of Righteousness to the people of Benares immediately after his attainment of Buddhaship, or enlightenment; and 2d, the account of his closing hours contained in the "Book of the Great Decease" (Mahaparanibbanasutta, "Sacred Books of the East," Vol. 40).

The life of the "Saviour of the East," so far as we know it, is soon told. In the palatial residence of the chief of one of the petty principalities of northeastern India, the Sankya tribe, in the town of Kapilavastu, a child was born to whom his parents gave the name of Siddhartha, "the fulfilment of wishes." The boy's mother died when he was very young, and he was brought up by an aunt in surroundings of wealth and luxury. When he reached the age of manhood he married his cousin, a princess, whom he loved with tender devotion. Now in Siddhartha's thirtieth year there came before him for the first time in his life the dark pictures of age, sickness, and death. The tradition represents him as out driving with his charioteer, and meeting successively a tottering old man, a poor unfortunate beggar writhing with pain, and a corpse carried on a bier. But this may be only the pictorial, eastern way of saying that the unpleasant thoughts of old age, pain, and dissolution entered the rich young man's mind to disturb him. At any rate, the vision, whether objective or subjective, was strong enough to drive Siddhartha from his home, his wife, and his newly born child, to a life of renunciation and meditation. He became a Brahmist Yogi, or ascetic. He retired to the woods in the company of five other monks and practised the

austerities of the Brahmanic faith. "The fame of his ascetic virtue," says the old legend, "sounded as far and loud as the clang of a gong hung in the skies." We are reminded of Martin Luther in the Augustinian convent of Erfurt. But Gautama, like Luther, did not find spiritual satisfaction in the vacuum of asceticism. He broke his fast, and was therefore deserted by his five monks. Still he struggled for light, and light came. While he was sitting beneath a fig tree (afterward called the Bodhi, or Bo-tree, the "tree of knowledge"), the truth suddenly dawned on him. He was thenceforth the Buddha, "the Enlightened One." His own words, celebrating the attainment of Buddhahood, are as follows: "Looking for the Maker of this tabernacle, I have to run through a course of many births as long as I find him not, and painful is birth again and again; but now, Maker of the tabernacle, thou hast been seen, thou shalt not make up this tabernacle again. All the rafters are broken; the ridge-pole is sundered; the mind, approaching the eternal, has reached the extinction of desires."

After a period of temptation not to carry his gospel to others, the Buddha like Jesus overcomes the evil one and starts joyfully toward the city of Benares to "beat the drum of the Immortal in the darkness of

the world" and to "set the wheel of the law in motion."

As he approaches the city, the five monks see him coming. They agree with one another not to receive him with reverence, nor to take his alms-bowl and cloak, nor to offer him water for his feet. For he has deserted the brotherhood of ascetics. But when he draws near they cannot resist his shining countenance. The mark of truth is stamped on his face. They receive him reverently, and he preaches to them the doctrine of the Kingdom of Righteousness, the "middle path" between asceticism and worldliness. They become his first converts. In Benares he slowly wins adherents. The more fervid adopt the bowl and gown and go forth to spread the Doctrine of the Buddha. Their master sends them out with words similar to those with which Jesus sent out his disciples: "Go, ye monks, and wander for the good of many, out of compassion for the world, for the gain and welfare of gods and men. Let not two of you go the same way. . . . Proclaim a consummate life of holiness. Preach the doctrine which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle, and glorious in the end." During the three months of the rainy season the Buddha and his monks remain in winter quarters in a park near the city, and are visited by great

troops of pilgrims. For the nine dry months the monks travel through the land, begging alms from house to house, and preaching the doctrine of the Enlightened One.

At last, at the age of eighty, after a life of over forty years' ardent missionary activity, the Buddha enters into Nirvana, or rest. The death-bed scene vividly depicted in the "Book of the Great Decease" ranks with Plato's description of the death of Socrates in the "Phædo." The disciples, above all the dearest of them, Ananda, surround their master, who sooths their grief with words of counsel and cheer. "Murmur not because I leave you," he said, "nor say that truth has perished because the Enlightened One has entered into Nirvana. The truth remains, the doctrine remains." "Seeking the way, ye must exert yourselves, and strive with diligence. It is not enough to have seen me; ye must walk as I have commanded. For he who walks in righteousness is ever near me, though he has never seen me. I exhort you brethren: Decay is the end of all things that have come into being. Work out your own salvation with untiring effort." So the master entered into his well-earned rest. His death is given as about the year 540 B.C.

III

The stereotyped confessional formula of the Buddhist convert was this: "I take my refuge in the Buddha, in the doctrine (Dhamma), and in the order (Sangha). The Buddha, the doctrine, and the order — these three are the component factors of the new religion. Of the first, the Buddha, we have spoken. We must remember, however, that this term was not the name of an individual, but was an official title like Christ, Pharaoh, or Czar. It means the Enlightened One, and Gautama Siddhartha was the twenty-fifth who had borne the title. He was afterward exalted to deity by his followers and worshipped as Jesus was and is in the Christian Church. But the original confession, "I take refuge in the Buddha," did not convey the idea of the worship of Gautama. His name does not occur in the fourfold doctrine of salvation. He was not a mediator, but only a teacher. The "Comforter," which he left behind, was the doctrine (Dhamma).

In the brief space of an essay of this sort we can study only in merest outline the doctrine of Buddha, on which volumes have been written by Rhys Davids, Oldenberg, Kern, Hardy, Williams, Hopkins, Dahlmann, Barth, and Max Müller. I would especially recommend a very handy and

attractive little volume by Dr. Paul Carus of Chicago, "The Gospel of Buddha," a compendium of selected verses from the Buddhist scriptures themselves illustrating the crucial points in Gautama's life and teaching.

The literature of Buddhism is preserved to us in copious writings in the Pali tongue (the language of northern India and Ceylon), which writings are being rapidly translated and published in English through the agency of the Pali Text Society (instituted at Oxford in 1882 by Professor Rhys Davids), and the "Sacred Books of the East," edited, as mentioned above, by the late Max Müller. The sacred writings are embodied in three Pitakas, or "Baskets." Remembering that the basket is the common instrument of conveyance in the East, even to this day, we shall see that these Pitakas meant vessels of tradition. They are 1st, the Vinaya Texts, containing the order of discipline and the opening of the ministry of the Buddha; 2d, the Suttas (or Sudras), containing the religious, moral, and philosophical discourses of the Buddha and his followers. These Suttas are the quintessence of Buddhism. There are dialectic passages like the famous dialogues of Plato, parables like those of Jesus (the parables of the Sower and the Prodigal Son are here, 500 years B.C.), Logia, or short, pointed sayings, often thrown

into the form of antitheses, aphorisms like those of the Gospels, poems, fairy tales, similes, fables, etc. The third Pitaka was called the Abidhamma, or commentary (literally "expansion"), containing, as its name implies, speculation and discussion on the doctrine of the Suttas. The Buddha himself, like Socrates and Jesus, wrote nothing.

Now the doctrine of Buddhism, as set forth in the Pitakas, is not a revolt against Brahmanism. The Buddha considered himself a good Brahman, just as Martin Luther considered himself a good Catholic; only the Buddha contended that neither the accident of birth nor the mechanism of ceremony made a man a true Brahman, but only nobility of soul and the ceaseless effort to attain to the consummation of character. In other words, Buddhism was a reformation, or, better, a restoration, and like every other reformation or restoration grew out of actual religious conditions, and preserved much of old forms and spirit. The phase of Brahmanism to which Buddhism was most closely allied was the Sankya philosophy, which rejected the holy authority of the Vedas, and regarded deliverance from suffering through enlightenment as the end of existence.

Forsaking both the asceticism of the Brahman

monks (Yogin) and the hair-splitting speculations of the Brahman sophists (which he called a jungle and a puppet show), the Buddha faced the facts of life as he saw them. It was the revolt of the prophet against the priest. A way of salvation, practical, rational, universal, and infallible, out of the suffering of existence, was what he sought. He saw all life vitiated with the taint of desire and seared with the fire of passion. "Birth is suffering, decay is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering. . . . Briefly, the . . . clinging to existence is suffering." This is the first of the four noble truths which the Buddha made the foundation of his teaching in his first sermon to the five monks near Benares. The fourth truth is the truth of the way of cessation from suffering, by the eightfold path of: —

1st. Right belief (*i.e.* without superstition or delusion).

2d. Right aspiration (*i.e.* after what things the thoughtful seek).

3d. Right speech (*i.e.* friendly and sincere).

4th. Right conduct (*i.e.* peaceable, honorable, and pure).

5th. Right living (*i.e.* pursuits not involving injury to others).

6th. Right endeavour (*i.e.* self-control and watchfulness).

7th. Right memory (*i.e.* presence of mind, or "wariness").

8th. Right meditation (*i.e.* earnest occupation with the great riddles of existence).

In following this scheme of salvation, the Buddha allowed no vicarious sacrifices or prayers of a priesthood to be of efficacy. He suffered no rigours of bodily asceticism or refinements of sophistical speculation to dim moral responsibility. His doctrine has been not unfitly named the *Protestantism of the East.* All its emphasis fell on the individual and his bounden duty to seek salvation by the utmost use of his powers of mind. "The discourses of the Exalted savour of redemption, as the sea savours of salt."

There were five stages on the eightfold path which led to insight and wisdom; and the highest stage was that of the Arahat ("he who has claim" [to reverence]). The Arahat is not yet a Buddha, for the Buddha saves others while the Arahat is only himself saved. He has broken the tenfold fetters of self, doubt, trust in works, sensuality, ill-will, desire for life, love of form, pride, self-righteousness, and ignorance. He has seen that all birth, pain, age, and death, all desire, thirst, consciousness, and emotion, come from cleaving through ignorance to a life of the senses. This life he has transcended through a

faithful walk in the eightfold path, and is ready for the blessedness of Nirvana. For the attainment of Arahatship the Buddha had the utmost confidence in the capacity of the human mind itself, unaided by any power from without. He disdained worship, ridiculed prayer, deplored sacrifice, magic, and incantations, scorned dialectics, and upbraided the sloth of those who were at ease in their orthodoxy. "The Brahmans," he said, "while they sit down in the confidence of their knowledge of the Vedas (the scriptures), are sinking in the mire of ignorance." They were like a chain of blind men with their mass of obscure traditions: "he that is in front sees not, nor he that is behind, nor he that is in the middle" — "blind leaders of the blind," as a yet greater teacher said of the Brahmans of his own day.

The rejection of the Brahmanic rites, prayers, and sacrifices gave to Buddhism its rationalistic character. Revelation was discarded for manifestation. Speculation was abandoned for moral effort. "Try to get as near as possible to knowledge and goodness in this world. Don't be curious about a future existence." To speculate on what the soul would be when life was done was like speculating on what the flame was after the fire was out. Equally foolish was it to philosophize about a God without attributes, and

a soul as an ego-entity, residing in the body separate from the acts of the individual, and flying out like a caged bird when life was over to enter into some other body. For his opposition to the doctrine of the Atman (or soul entity), the sundered metaphysical ego, and the doctrine of the Maja Atman, or great spirit, which was simply the personification of the pantheistic idea of changelessness sitting calm and cold above the realms of vicissitude, the Buddha has earned the repute of advocating a religion which knows neither God nor the soul. We are dealing with terms hard to define when we talk of *God* and *soul;* and I would beg the reader before committing himself rashly to this opinion of the Buddha's atheism and apsychism, to study in the Buddhistic scriptures themselves. In the Dhammapada and the Suttanipata (Vol. 10, "Sacred Books of the East") one will find the teachings of Gautama in their purest and loftiest form, and one will also be reading books which take their rank with the grandest creations of the human spirit in the world's imperishable literature. One will read there:—

"Earnestness is the path of immortality; thoughtlessness is the path of death. Those who are in earnest do not die; those who are thoughtless are dead already."

"By one's self is evil done, by one's self one

suffers. . . . Purity and impurity belong to one's self. None can purify another."

"Let us live happily, free from hatred among hating men, well among the ailing, strong among the foolish."

"Kinsmen, friends, and lovers salute a man who has been on a journey and returns. In like manner do his good deeds receive him who goes from this world to the other."

"There is no fire like passion, no shark like hatred, no snare like folly, and no torment like greed."

"As a mother, at the risk of her life, guards her only child, so let every man cherish good will to all his fellows."

Did the teacher who spoke thus believe in the soul or not? In that sort of soul which the mediæval painters depicted as being jerked out of the mouth of moribund bodies by angels or devils, and carried away to heaven or hell; in the sort of soul which is more or less naïvely believed in by the great mass of people to-day, undoubtedly the Buddha did not believe. But if belief in the soul means to believe that heaven is spirit, that the least deed or thought is not without meaning for eternity, that habit follows on deed, and character on habit, and destiny on character with inexorable fidelity, then I for one confess that I have found no character in

history with a loftier belief in the soul than Gautama the Buddha. And as for the belief in God, we must remember what sort of a God of the Brahmans it was that he rejected: a meaningless, empty concept of mere negation of change. For a God whose name is "No," "no," and whose symbol is "Om," who would wish to have reverence? Atheism is an easy charge to make. The men of every age who have thought a little more deeply than the mass of the people have been obnoxious to that charge. But what if we were as honest intellectually as the Buddha was! Does any orthodox Christian, with the least acquaintance with modern science, still believe in a Creator fashioning *ex nihilo* the universe and *ex pulvere* man? We miss entirely the genius of the Buddha's faith when we hold him to definition of it in terms which with us, through centuries of Christian ethics and Anglo-Saxon politics, have acquired a fixed and specific meaning. There is in the Buddhist scriptures one incident in illustration of this, so apt, so modern that I cannot refrain from quoting it. Vashagotta the Brahman came to the Buddha and asked: "O Buddha, does the soul exist?" and the Buddha held his peace. Then asked Vashagotta, "O Buddha, does the soul *not* exist?" And again the Buddha was silent. Then Vashagotta went away. The Buddha's

disciple Ananda, amazed, asked the master why he had not replied to Vashagotta. "Because," said the Buddha, "he would not have understood either answer." The devout modern scientist would have no other way of treating the devout modern revivalist who came to him with the question, Does God exist or not?

One more term in the teaching of the Buddha deserves notice before we pass to the third clause of the confession. That term is the famous *Nirvana*, the Buddhist symbol for salvation. Here again popular expositors of Buddhism, especially those most concerned to show the inferiority of Buddhism to Christianity, have hastily assumed and declared that Nirvana means annihilation of the soul, even some expositors who have proved to their own satisfaction that the Buddha taught there is no soul to be annihilated. "Nirvana" means the "going out," but that it does not mean the extinction of consciousness as such is proven by the single fact that the Buddha attained Nirvana (as other Buddhas had done) already in this life. Of the continuation of consciousness beyond this life, the Buddha has nothing definite to say. He regarded speculation on the future beyond the reach of our minds as a useless occupation. What did go out in the Nirvana of the Buddha were the three fires of lust, hatred, and delusion.

The cleansing of the ethical consciousness was enough for the Buddha without the satisfaction of the metaphysical consciousness. Perhaps this was an injustice on his part to the whole nature of man; but let us not confound the silence of agnosticism with the eristic denial of dogmatism. That a man's deeds were of indelible import for the future, that in Karma his moral influence was immortal, that the task of making his life pure and earnest was quite enough for the present life, that the method of this task was the resolute quenching of desire through walking on the eightfold path, that the eye of the mind must be free from the glamour of priestly ritual to maintain its steady view of the path — this was the splendid doctrine of the Buddha. And his own words may suggest whither he thought obedience to this doctrine would lead. "Earnestness is the path of immortality, thoughtlessness the path of death. Those who are in earnest do not die." "The monk who has turned from desire and attachment, and is possessed of understanding, he has already gone to the immortal place, the changeless state of Nirvana."

"I take refuge in the order" — these words are the third clause of the Buddhist confession. The Buddhistic order was a society of monks closely resembling the mendicant order of St.

Francis of Assisi in the Middle Ages. Its motto was, "Freedom is in the forsaking of the home and hearth." The monastic order was not peculiar to Buddhism in India, however. As we have seen, there were already Brahman monks, and it was the Brahmanical monasticism which first broke down the barriers of caste in India. The Buddhistic order was a republic in form. There was no hard and fast rule either requiring entrance into the society or forbidding egress from it. There was no hierarchy regulating doctrine. A man or woman of any philosophy or religion was welcome. Only soldiers, criminals, lepers, and minors whose parents had not consented were refused admission. There was a short period of probation for novices and those who came from other orders. The members took the brown garb and the alms-bowl, and begged their living from house to house. Twice every month the monks were obliged, every one, to assemble for a confessional service. It was a picturesque scene: by the light of a torch the eldest monk read a list of offences grave and venial before the assembled brotherhood, and each member in turn made solemn confession that he was free from the sins recited. Annually, just previous to the departure of the monks for their itinerant mission, was held the Ceremony of Invitation, so-called, at which each

brother rose and begged his fellow-monks to reprimand him if he had failed in duty or conduct, so that he might start on the new mission with more enlightened self-judgment and higher purposes. These two remarkable and praiseworthy gatherings were the only approach to a cultus that Buddhism knew.

IV

We must now leave the Buddhist creed and turn to a brief criticism of the philosophy, religion, and ethics of the system.

Professor Dahlmann, in his brilliant new work, "Buddha, Ein Culturbild des Ostens," contends that Buddhism is in the first instance a phase of Indian philosophy. "The denial of all the Brahmanic theories of existence and non-existence," he says, "brought Buddhism into life." Now while it is true that the philosophy of Buddhism was keen and deep, and wonderfully prophetic of the modern age in its emphasis on the unity of all life and the influence of heredity, the conviction grows stronger with the study of the Buddha's life and teachings, that the place held by metaphysics in the Buddhistic system is entirely subordinate. The Buddha received his gospel by direct inward illumination under the Bo-tree. He preached that the truth was to be found out, not by argu-

ment (it was only so defended), but by conscious and voluntary purification of the mind through ethical aspiration. Therefore we have called Buddha the "Prince of Mysticism." Not in the sense that he clave to mystic rites or advocated mental indifferentism: quite the opposite — he was a pronounced free thinker, and a wonderfully deep thinker. Only the spring of all his freedom and clearness of mind was that prior inward enlightenment which has been the source of the mystic's confidence in all ages.

Again, in respect to its religious character, Buddhism must be judged in its historic setting. It denies God's existence, say many critics, therefore it is not worthy to be called a religion. But is not this a hasty judgment? Does religion consist more in the belief in the existence of this or that metaphysical entity, or in man's dynamic conviction of moral and spiritual improvement, and the confidence in his ability to attain such improvement? It is true that Buddhism dropped the empty, meaningless god of the Brahmans, personified and petrified nothingness; and it is also true that it found no other god to put in the place of the Brahmans' god. "For the first time in the history of the world," says Professor Rhys Davids (and we might add, for the *only* time), "there was proclaimed a salvation which each man could gain

for himself and by himself, in this life, without any least reference to god or gods, great or small." But is it more atheistic to deny a god whom you cannot possibly reach than to affirm such a god? Is it less a religion to follow with singleness of purpose and passionate devotion the divine truths of righteousness, purity, and love, which have dawned on the spirit of man, than to hold some correct and complicated notions about a traditional deity? The Buddha's atheism was the atheism of Spinoza and Fichte, "God is the moral world-order." And we might add, the Buddha's atheism is the atheism of every deeper thinker and more earnest seeker for truth from Anaxagoras to Renan. Which of the saints and martyrs, to the Nazarene himself, have they not banished, burned, or crucified for denying the mean, spirit-starving god he found men worshipping! There is a tribe of Fiji Islanders who believe that while they are eating the roasted bodies of their enemies their god is feasting on the well-cooked souls of the same victims. There are people who believe in "God and the soul" —even to a soul that can be roasted and a god who enjoys eating it!

But to return to the Buddha, the important point of his religious negativism is that it, like his philosophical negativism, is not of primary

concern to him, but is only a corollary of his ethics. He had no theology at all. His whole interest centred not in the metaphysics, but in the ethics of salvation; not in the theory, but in the fact of the deliverance from evil. "Redemption filled his discourses as the salt fills the sea." "Let the wise man cleanse his soul of pollution as the smith refines his silver." "By one's self is evil done and undone. . . . None can purify another." He believed in the infinite capacity of the human mind to remove ignorance, and all the evils in the train of ignorance, from itself. Hence the bracing optimism of his ethics. Virtue in his mind was a duty every man owed to himself. The resoluteness with which he inculcated and practised the doctrine of the sacrifice of every thing and thought of sense arouses our enthusiastic admiration. The utter kindness and humaneness of his precepts win the consent of our hearts. Nevertheless, in spite of all its excellent points,—enlightenment of mind, a clear moral vision, individual responsibility, rigid self-examination, concentration of moral effort, belief in the absolute goodness of goodness and the eternal virtue of virtue,—Buddhism falls far short of satisfying the religious and ethical aspirations of our modern world. Its virtues are marred by certain grave defects. It stands for enlight-

enment of mind, but it destroys personality by ignoring, even condemning that hope of a future life which springs eternal in the human breast. It inculcates the virtues of justice and righteousness, but the monkish ideal of virtue is predominant. Salvation was rather by repression than by expansion in the Buddhistic programme. The valiant ideal of struggle for the world's redemption was not nurtured in the Buddha's soul by an unalterable conviction of the ultimate triumph of the kingdom of heaven in the earth. Manual labour was prohibited in the Buddha's order: "He who tills the ground is fit to do penance." Consequently the evils attendant upon the contemplative life, idleness, unproductiveness, and mental sloth, in spite of the Buddha's own tireless self-sacrifice for the salvation of others, began early to invade the Buddhist brotherhoods. The great doctrine of social service was not yet learned. The affections, desires, passions, and joys of life, instead of being enlisted in the service of the whole man, were starved and atrophied for fear they might be the ministers of evil. The Buddhist was too much on the defensive.

This is the case against Buddhism as a religion for mankind. And I believe that we must find the explanation for the "splendid failure" of Buddhism in the fact that, having dispensed

with the useless God of the Brahmans, the Master had nothing to offer in its place. For the Buddhist, consequently, there was no upholder of the moral order, no great and unchanging

> "living will, that shall endure
> When all that seems shall suffer shock."

V

Buddhism spread quite rapidly in India as a result of the reverence for Gautama (often called Sakya-mouni, "the monk of the Sakyas") after his death. The Indian Emperor Asôka, in the middle of the third century B.C., made Buddhism the state religion of India. But it was a different Buddhism from the Buddhism of the Buddha. In this new state religion Gautama was glorified, and raised to the office of the divine mediator, the Indian Messiah. This was the official Buddhism sent out by the missionaries of the Emperor Asôka to Afghan, Tibet, Ceylon, Mongolia, China, Korea, and Japan. It is in these foreign countries that Buddhism flourishes to-day, having, like Christianity, vanished entirely from the land of its birth. To-day Buddhism is the state religion of Burma and Tibet, with a form in the latter country almost exactly like Roman Catholicism. The Grand Lama of Tibet is a pope with triple crown, and the worship has ritual, pilgrimages, shrines, saints,

rosaries, priests, and purgatory. In China Buddhism is a popular religion, and it makes considerable headway against the state religion of Confucius. In Siam it is the religion of the court, the venerable king being an enthusiastic propagandist. It was he who made the first subscription to Professor Rhys Davids's Pali Text Society in 1882, and in 1894 he presented Harvard University with twenty-nine volumes of the sacred Pitakas in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his accession to the throne. Moreover, in Japan, Nepaul, Ceylon, — in fact, throughout eastern Asia, — Buddhism is widespread. It numbers perhaps 350,000,000 adherents, about one-fourth of the world's population. In all these countries Buddhism appears in a variety of forms, there being twelve sects in Japan alone. There is little prospect that the religion itself will extend into the lands of the west, although the influence of the philosophy and ethics of Buddhism in the west is very great, and perhaps on the increase. We have yet to be quite fair in our recognition of the majesty of the religion of Gautama, the Buddha.

VI

In closing let us ask what the Buddha stands for that he should have a place in the pantheon

of the world's spiritual heroes. His religion was not national, like that of the Hebrews; it had nothing to do with the politics of India. The Buddha did not withstand kings and princes, as did Jeremiah and Martin Luther. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars. The glory of Buddha is the glory of the stars. His doctrine has the calm of the deep, distant heaven on a windless night, a peace undisturbed by the quarrels of persecution, a resignation profound and final. It doesn't make for civilization because it abandons the world. It doesn't fire us with courage to live and work for society because it sees only the vanity of desire and the transiency of the things of sense. It magnifies the evil of suffering, and makes a demon of pain, missing the divine truth that through suffering the soul is made perfect. Yet for all its insufficiency as a religion for mankind, Buddhism is an excellent corrective to much that is petty, impatient, narrow, and unlovely in our religious zeal; and we may often turn with relief from the discordant wrangles of dogmatism and the intolerable positivism of our creeds to this calm, majestic Indian monk of twenty-five centuries ago, whose words were wise and whose deeds were pure, who set his whole soul to the pursuit of wisdom, who gave his whole

life to the instruction of his brethren, who proved in his own person forever the truth of his own beautiful and winged word, "Good men shine from afar like snowy mountains, but the wicked are not seen, like the arrow shot by night."

CHAPTER III

SOCRATES, THE CHAMPION OF INTELLECTUAL PIETY

"All our dignity consists in thinking. Let us labour then to think well; for this is the gist of morals."

—PASCAL.

IF one had passed through the market or any of the well-travelled streets of Athens, or had happened to step into a saddler's or a cobbler's shop, or had joined the stream of youths on the way to the Palæstra or the Gymnasium, almost any day, summer or winter, during the last quarter of the fifth century B.C., one would, in one place or another, have met a figure which, seen for the first time, would cause one to turn and look again and smile—a short, obese man, barefooted and clad in a soiled, threadbare tunic with no cloak over his shoulders; on his thick neck a head which would have been conspicuous for any one of its strikingly ugly features: the thick, satyrlike lips, the retroussé nose with uncovered nostrils, or the bulging bull-like eyes which rolled constantly with nervous, inquiring energy. Perhaps he would

have been standing on a corner, lost in meditation (they said he spent a day and a night so once while in camp among the cold hills of Thrace). Or he might have been plucking a rich young lord by his mantle and exhorting him thus, "Food and clothing I can buy in yonder shops, but where in Athens shall I find virtue and wisdom?" Or again, he might have been the centre of an admiring group of youths, with one or two elder sceptics lingering on the edge of the circle, discoursing by rapid catechetical fire on courage, piety, beauty, filial virtue, knowledge, politics, or the love of wisdom.

Such were the appearance and the mission of Socrates, son of Sophroniscus the stone-cutter. His enthusiasm was unbounded, his devotion to a life of unrequited toil was unflagging; for, as he told his judges when on trial for his life, he was commissioned by the god Apollo to stay his countrymen in their race for riches, pleasures, and honours, and adjure them to think of the values of life. Athens, in his homely figure, was a great, stall-fed horse, lazy and contented; he was the gadfly sent to sting it into action and to save it from the curse of lethargy.

To understand the life and work of Socrates we must examine briefly the Athens of the end of the fifth century B.C., in respect to its politics, its philosophical and literary activity, and its

artistic and religious ideals. We shall then see what was Socrates's problem; and having noticed the method with which he dealt with that problem, and the doctrine which resulted therefrom, we shall attempt to estimate the value of this great prophet of intellectual freedom for Greece and the world.

I

Ten years before Socrates was born (*i.e.* in the year 479 B.C.) the Greeks, by the victory of Platæa, drove the last of the Persian invading armies out of their land. Thus was finished nobly and bravely the work begun eleven years before on the battle-field of Marathon, — a work, so far as human judgment may pronounce, the most momentous in the history of mankind. For by the preservation of Greek independence there was guaranteed to the world the fruit of the Greek intellect in art, literature, and philosophy. It was not merely a question whether Greece should become another satrapy of Persia, District XXV; it was a question whether the immortal genius of Sophocles, Phidias, Myron, Pericles, Thucydides, Ictinus, and Socrates should unfold in a land of freedom or be crushed in a district of despotism.

It was Athens chiefly that felt the wholesome reaction of the strenuous labour of the expulsion

of the Persian from Greece, as it had been Athens which was most injured and most threatened by his presence there. By the probity and genius of such men as Aristides and Cimon, as contrasted with the venal trickery of the Spartan Pausanias, Athens got the confidence of the Greek allies and willingly assumed the protectorate over the Greek islands of the Ægean and the Greek cities of the coast land of Asia Minor. The alliance between Athens and these islands was called the Delian League, its centre and treasury being the little island of Delos. Through the contributions of the allies to the League, Athens became a great maritime power, whose interests in commerce and war extended from the Black Sea to the cities of Sicily; while Sparta, voluntarily shrunken to her old limits in the Peloponnese, confined herself to the narrow and immemorial Dorian policy of the city camp. The genius of Sparta was intensive; that of Athens extensive. Athens welcomed strangers: architects and painters from Argos, historians from Asia, philosophers from Ionia, orators from Sicily; Sparta closed her gates against the world. Athens built beautifully and strongly, leaving the world such monuments as the Theseum, the Propylæa, and the Parthenon; Sparta remained a provincial village at the foot of the Taygetus hills. Soldiers from a single

ward in Athens fell fighting, in the one year of 458, in Cyprus, Egypt, Argos, Ægina, and Phœnicia; while in all the interval between the Persian and the Peloponnesian wars (479–432), except for a single campaign in Thebes, no soldier of Sparta stained the land north of the Corinthian Gulf and Isthmus with his blood. It was with Athens, then, that the future of Greece lay after the Persian was expelled; the glorious Athens of Cimon and Pericles, the "eye of Greece," "Hellas in Hellas," the "workshop of the muses."

And yet the memorable years between the Persian and the Peloponnesian wars were not a period of unmixed blessing to Athens. Cosmopolitanism, prosperity, artistic energy, commercial expansion, philosophic fervour, all worked havoc with the simple faith and manners of the descendants of Solon. The sternness of the age of Marathon gave way to the versatility of the era of the demagogue. Athens became a "Weltstadt," a world-city, with all that term implies in the relaxing of sturdy habits, the loosening of the bands of inviolable dogmas, the quietus of the spirit of moral responsibility in the levelling cosmopolitanism of the age. The evolution of Athens in this respect was feverishly rapid. From Æschylus to Euripides was but a generation; yet in that time the drama passed from

a calm, lofty idealism to the most outspoken realism. In Æschylus the great principles of divine vengeance, of inexorable fate, of infallible prophecies and inviolable divinities are worked out in majestic diction and with awful power. Men are but puppets, pawns of fate; the gods work and will, reward and punish. In Euripides all this is changed for the delineation of the loves and hates and hopes and fears of real men and women in the real Athens of the fifth century. Euripides sometimes verges on the modern problem play. The gods with him have dwindled to a piece of stage machinery; they are less real than the Ghost of Banquo or the apparition of Cæsar's spirit in the tent at Philippi. A tone of scepticism, world weariness, and despair pervades Euripides's dramas. Nobody can be called fortunate; life is a blunder; we are children of care, and slaves either of gold, chance, or the crowd. To-day only is ours; let us eat, drink, and be merry. Let us celebrate the narcotic goddess, — that is, if such things as gods and goddesses be.

Nor does Euripides's contemporary Aristophanes, the satirist of his age, give us a more hopeful view of his city and times. He paints the Athenians in his comedy, "The Knights," as vindictive, office-mad, gullible, and impious. And while posing himself as a panegyrist of the "good old

times" of simple faith and honest deeds, he outrages every sensibility of the orthodox Athenian; he treats the gods with jocose contempt, paints Heracles a braggart, Dionysus a gaping idiot, and Hermes a clever cheat.

It would be instructive to follow in detail other factors in the rapid democratization and demoralization of Athens in the last half of the fifth century: how the august tribunal of the Areopagus was shorn of its power and judgment was put into the hands of the large democratic courts; how the high office of archon degenerated into a titled sinecure, and the management of the city passed into the hands of clever demagogues and generals; how the people were encouraged to feed in idleness on the opulence of their fatherland, not only by the largesses of free corn and free theatre tickets, but even by direct pay for services as jurymen and for attendance on the popular assembly, or ecclesia; how religion under the blows of a sceptical philosophy and the poison of a jaunty world-wisdom was driven from its high office of informing the thought and letters of Greece and forced to take refuge in a cultus of feasts and processions. The gods of Æschylus were fast moving toward that limbo whereto are consigned the hobgoblins of our childhood's fears and fancies. And to add to all this confusion and clamour was the

pest of the long, losing war Athens was fighting for a quarter of a century with her rival Sparta. We must, however, leave to one side these rich fields of inquiry in the history of the Athens of Pericles, to turn to a single aspect of the age, the one most immediate to our subject: namely, the course of philosophy previous to Socrates.

II

The pre-Socratic philosophy was determined by two elements: the speculations of the Ionians and their successors, and the practical philosophy of the Sicilians. It was in the cities of advanced culture in Asia Minor, above all in Miletus, that the first inquiries were made into the nature of phenomena. This philosophy was pure physics; it was concerned only to know the composition, principles, and mutations of the material world. It sought a principle of unity, finding it (or thinking to find it) sometimes in water, sometimes in air, sometimes in boundless ether. Little by little the philosophy of nature became more complex. Empedocles of Agrigentum found the ultimate components of all the universe in earth, air, fire, and water, which elements were moved by love and hate (*i.e.* attraction and repulsion), the lighter ones of air and fire being projected to the outer sphere to form the atmosphere and the luminaries of

heaven, the heavier ones of earth and water contracting to make an earth. Through the hands of Leucippus and Democritus, philosophers of Thrace, this doctrine of Empedocles was developed into an atomistic theory of the universe, practically akin to the doctrine of the few materialists of to-day, the doctrine, namely, that by a chance concurrence, atoms of dead matter have combined to form the world as we know it. This doctrine received its classic expression at the hands of Rome's most gifted poetical genius, Lucretius.

An epoch was signalized in Greek speculation when Anaxagoras of Clazomenæ suggested the intervention of a supra-material force to make the mass of matter or chaos into a world or cosmos. That force was *mind* (νοῦς), and by its recognition Anaxagoras became the father of idealism. So great was his significance even among the ancients that Aristotle says that he appeared like a sober man in the midst of drunkards.

Now the result of all this speculation started by the Ionian school was that no two men agreed in their explanation of the universe, while all agreed that a principle of unity must be sought beyond the changing phenomena of the external world. For one philosopher all was constant flux and change; for another the ulti-

mate truth was pure, changeless being. For one, the universe was a fortuitous juxtaposition of material atoms; for another, it was the plan of a governing mind. For all, it was a riddle too complex to be solved by the old fables of Hesiod and Homer, and too interesting to be abandoned for the stern, moral preaching of Æschylus. The spirit of inquiry was abroad; it could no more be quieted by exiling philosophers like Anaxagoras and Diagoras, or burning the books of Protagoras, than it can to-day be quieted by ecclesiastical legislation.

But of by far the greatest moment to Athens and to the world was the extension of this spirit of exhaustive inquiry from the realm of nature to that of conduct and statecraft — from physics, that is, to ethics and politics. What is the measure of right and wrong? What is the value of tradition and custom? What does authority mean? Is truth, like Parmenides's world, a pure, changeless, eternal idea, or is it like Heraclitus's world, constantly a flux, never the same for two successive moments? The prosecution of this moral and political metaphysics was carried on chiefly by thinkers in the cities of Magna Græcia (Southern Italy) and Sicily, and its peculiar form was a rich and versatile rhetoric. The *sophists* (as these rhetoricians were called) made it their business to teach the

art of persuasion. They were "intellectual gladiators ready to maintain any thesis for the sake of display and profit." They travelled widely over the Greek world, meeting chiefly, of course, in its capital Athens, just as the various Christian schools of the second century A.D. met in Rome. They called in question every principle and tradition of the old morality and religion, and taught young striplings in a few lessons to air themselves on the impossibility of objective truth and the old fogyism of their fathers' religion. The *fin de siècle* was drawing near.

The two chief sophists perhaps were Georgias and Protagoras. The former devoted himself to proving the contention that, 1st, nothing is; 2d, if anything were, it could not be known; and 3d, if it could be known, it couldn't be communicated to others — utter and absolute scepticism. Protagoras has left us two notable sayings: 1st, "Man is the measure of all things," and 2d, "As to the gods I do not know whether they exist or not, the problem being difficult and life short." By the first of these dicta, Protagoras champions the absolute relativity of knowledge and morality, and fails to see that for man to be a reliable measure of anything he must himself be measured by a standard of universal truth and probity. In the second saying, Protagoras

pronounces himself an agnostic. The philosophers of Miletus had emptied Olympus of its gods; the sophists of Sicily were emptying the world of its godliness. Obviously, unless a bound could be set to this rage of unprincipled innovation, unless Athens could be saved from sophist poets, sophist statesmen, sophist generals, and, worst of all, a sophist populace, all was over with the old Greek religion and morality which Aristophanes mourned with his crocodile tears.

Socrates, the stone-cutter's son, set himself to the task of placing such bounds to the Athenian rage of unprincipled innovation. Not that he made the foolish mistake of flying in the face of the spirit of the age; not that he tried to force the emancipated mind back into the tutelage of the mystagogues. He accepted the truth which the philosophers and the sophists emphasized; viz. that the reason must be given first place, and men must stop blindly following a tradition. He even accepted the weapons of the sophists, the dialectic method of investigation, the discussion of the pros and cons of a subject with utter intellectual freedom. But he turned the weapon of the sophists against themselves. He showed how weak and superficial their investigation was; how hasty their conclusions. They said, "Man is the measure of all things."—"Yes," continues Socrates; "but what is man?

Do you know him in his capacities and his high responsibilities? Is he only this farmer or that senator, or a sailor in the Peiræus, or a digger in Athens?" They said, "Knowledge is impossible."—"But," answers Socrates, "what do you mean by knowledge? Have you ever sought to define it? Clearly, not all knowledge is impossible, for how then could you know that this very statement of yours, that it is impossible, is true?"

In other words, Socrates met the sophists on their own ground and showed them how friable the earth was under their feet. He confessed with them that the old theology was no longer sufficient basis for moral life; that the Ionian philosophy of nature was too narrow for the restless Greek spirit; that the contradictions of the dogmatic systems of philosophy made dogmatism ridiculous and the dogmatist a fool; that a materialistic view of the world was unable to furnish ideal sanctions. But, while they drew from these facts the hasty deduction that, therefore, there is no moral life, no objective idealism, no sure method in philosophy, he laboured patiently to build up a sane, comprehensive, exhaustively critical attitude in the minds of his listeners. He was the creator of intellectual freedom; before him there had been only speculation; he inaugurated science,—a scientific ethics

to replace the discredited theological standards, a scientific criticism to replace the dogmatic systems, a scientific idealism to replace the uncertainty of the observations of the senses. He neither begged the question, nor despaired of it, nor appealed to priestly revelation for its answer; but he faced it with the patient, persistent exercise of all his powers of mind, leaving it for another trial in this world or the next if it was too much for his present powers. He was neither an affirmer of knowledge, like the dogmatist, nor a denier of it, like the sceptic; but always a true, earnest seeker for it. Against the soulless, formless materialism of the philosophers, and the sophists' glorification of form without content, he set his whole noble nature and ample intellect. He was an optimist; the sophists were pessimists. He sought for a principle, a definition which would stand critical test; they gave up the search to publish the bankruptcy of knowledge. He was religious, believing that absolute law and a sovereign will were behind this universe; they were irreligious, rashly denying all they could not see and handle. He was patient, they were hasty. He was concerned for the truth, they for their reputations. He was a fighter, they were fencers.

III

Having seen what was the problem of Socrates, let us approach him nearer and examine his method and its resulting doctrine.

Socrates believed that the majority of men, confining themselves to assumptions whose validity they have never tested, really have no knowledge, but only seem to themselves to know. He saw, moreover, that the religion of his countrymen had not been overthrown by sound science. "The sceptics of the age of Pericles," as Merivale well says, "did not deny a first cause out of any experimental amplification of the domain of second causes. . . . Reason had settled into atheism at a time when science was content to believe that the sun was a glowing rock about the size of the Peloponnesus." Socrates had read the philosophers in his youth, only to be disgusted with their mutual refutations, their own inconsistencies, and their unscientific procedure. He abandoned Anaxagoras and Heraclitus, Parmenides and Zeno, to search the human mind itself — just as his great successor, Immanuel Kant, twenty-two centuries later, turned from the disputes of the dogmatists to a calm, independent scrutiny of the human reason. The heavens and their laws he left out of the count, "thinking such things to be beyond human ken,"

as his knightly biographer Xenophon remarks, and turned to the search of the soul. For him "the proper study of mankind [was] man."

He addressed himself chiefly to the young men of the city, inviting discussion with them in the market-place, the gymnasia, or the shops. He was no closet student, but a plain man of the people, a workingman's son like Martin Luther, with more sense for freedom and majesty of soul than for fineness of speech or delicacy of tone. His similes were drawn from the cobbler's shop, the stable, and the dog kennel. He was a "self-made man" in philosophy. He dealt with concrete themes, and led up into the abstract and the general from the particular. He was insatiate of knowledge, adopting Solon's phrase as his own, "to grow old still learning." He is said to have studied music when in the sixties. With this thirst for knowledge he also combined a perennial willingness, nay desire, to impart what he knew to others. "Whatever he knew," says his biographer, "he shared most enthusiastically with others; and if he didn't know a subject himself, he took his pupil to one who did." The young men were devoted to him, despite his ugly face and his threadbare tunic. He was a favourite at their feasts, and could keep his head when the rest were under the table. Antisthenes (later the founder of the

Cynic School) used to walk every day from the Peiræus to be with him; and Euclid, an inhabitant of Megara, which town was on the Spartan side in the war, used to steal into Athens disguised in woman's clothes to enjoy the profit of Socrates's conversations. If we can believe the account of his end in Plato's "Phædo," the sweetness and fairness of Socrates's temper won even his shrewish wife, Xanthippe, to wail for him; while his pupils, Apollodorus and Crito, wept like women at the thought of losing "the wisest, best, and tenderest friend they had ever known."

Socrates taught by the celebrated dialectic method, *i.e.* by catechising his hearers on all sides, and in all the implications of a question. For example, the question is: Is it right to deceive? Certainly not. But it is right to deceive the enemy in war, and so outwit him? Yes. Then deception is right in the case of an enemy, but not in the case of a friend? Yes. But if your friend is hankering for poison in an hour of dejection, that he may commit suicide, is it not right to deceive him as to the whereabouts of the bottle? Certainly it is. So Socrates discovers to his hearers that they have no clear ideas at all on the subject of the right and wrong of telling lies. He exercises them in the same way on other questions: What is courage?

what is knowledge? what is virtue? what is love? what is right-mindedness? what is justice? what is piety? what is self-government? etc., seeking always first to overcome in them that false "scrupulosity lest they should seem to doubt any subject," and bringing them finally by his *elenchus*, or clinch of the argument, to confess their inability to proceed. They are checkmated in the game of their own opening. "Before I knew you," says his interlocutor in the "Meno," "I heard of you, how you yourself are at a loss for knowledge, and how you bring others to the same confession."

But Socrates's "irony" — or pretence of ignorance — was not altogether negative in its aim. He did, to be sure, want his hearers to remove the preconceived omniscience from their minds; but when they made humble confession of ignorance, he was prompt to help them reconstruct their knowledge on a sound, critical basis.

If now we turn to inquire what was Socrates's doctrine, we are met at the outset by a dispute which has enlisted the skill and erudition of some of the world's greatest scholars, the dispute, namely, as to where Socrates's doctrine is to be found. Socrates himself wrote nothing. The sources from which we derive our first-rate information of him are the writings of his two pupils, Xenophon and Plato. The former, a prac-

tical, large-souled, courageous man of the world, wrote "Memoirs" of Socrates in four books to vindicate his master's orthodoxy of faith and probity of morals. Plato, a poet and seer, makes Socrates the chief speaker in about forty "Dialogues," which for depth of thought and beauty of form are reckoned among the most perfect literary masterpieces of the world. Just how much the real Socrates suffers in the "Memoirs" from the enthusiasm of the apologist and in the "Dialogues" from the imagination of the poet, it is impossible to tell. And we shall probably be nearly right if we follow the advice of the old Latin poet and "hold to the middle path." It is certain, on the one hand, that Plato could never have made Socrates the centre of his groups of thinkers who discuss the nature of the soul, the theory of knowledge, and the laws of beauty, if his master had been only the unspeculative, utilitarian moralist he is painted by Xenophon. On the other hand, there may be a background of truth for the words Diogenes Laertius attributes to Socrates after the latter has read Plato's early dialogue, the "Lysis," "By Heracles, what tales the young man puts into my mouth!"

The hopelessness of entering into any detailed discussion of the matter in a study of an hour may be shown by the citation of a few of the conclusions as to Socrates's mission reached by

distinguished students of the great thinker. Zeller looks on Socrates as the regenerator of philosophy after its disintegration in the hands of the sophists. Grote regards him primarily as a religious reformer, a cross-examining deputy of Apollo to convert Athens. Fouillée calls him a great speculative genius, the creator of a spiritual metaphysics. Lévêque places the emphasis on Socrates's ethical doctrine, and claims that the philosopher's one purpose was to free this ethical from the trammels of the metaphysical. Who shall pronounce when doctors disagree? Yet cannot all these scholars be partially correct in their interpretation of Socrates, failing only in the undue emphasis they place on their peculiar appreciation of the great Athenian? Zeller as a disciple of Hegel, Grote as a sympathetic student of Athenian culture, Fouillée as a passionate Platonist — all bring more or less of their own prejudice into their estimate of Socrates. This much I believe we must all hold to, that Socrates's ultimate aim was eminently practical. He sought to make the moral life, the life of the "beautiful good" predominate. In order to make the moral predominate, he saw that it was necessary to show that the moral is also rational. Hence his encomium on the reason, and his passion for moral philosophy. To know, with him, was the highest state of felicity, not

for the sake of the knowledge itself, but for the insight into the springs of action and the control of the forms of action which knowledge brought. For, according to Socrates, practice of the good followed immediately on sufficient knowledge of the good. What evil men did, they did through ignorance. Just as every sane mind must confess, after sufficient knowledge of geometry, that the three angles of every triangle equal 180 degrees, so must every sane soul acquiesce in the imperious demands of the beautiful good, the reasonableness of that good being once seen. Evil action, he believed, resulted from passions which came of warped opinions. Science (*i.e. ratio*, or reason) dissipates opinions by establishing knowledge. Hence science frees from evil. Of goods Socrates made three categories: 1st, external goods, — wealth, beauty, reputation; 2d, physical goods, — health and sanity; and 3d, the great mental good of insight. This last was a divine good, "The spirit of man," says Socrates, "which more than all else human has a part of the divine."

Socrates's doctrine of the infallible and irresistible guidance of the beautiful good for the soul that let itself be governed only by reason, resulted in a bracing moral creed. There was nothing of the scorner or the mystic in Socrates. He placed evil in the minds of men, and believed

in the infinite capacity of the mind, purified by knowledge, to overcome the evil. "He that endureth shall be saved," is the doctrine of the "Republic." Indulgence of the sensuous nature, the besetting sin of the Greeks, while not condemned *in toto* and out of principle by Socrates, was relegated to the low place in the scale of good which it deserves. Above pleasure are the goods of reason, insight, knowledge, and art. The joys of fine colours, forms, sounds, and odours are real for Socrates. Above all, the quality of the beautiful good is never mixed with evil. Just as the smallest bit of pure white is whiter than whatever quantity you please of tinged white (to borrow Socrates's figure in the "Philebus"), so is the slightest vision of the real good better than a wealth of clouded moral doctrine. Moral sophistry he could not endure. Mixed motives were to him like the mixed measures of the Phrygian and Lydian music. "The truly harmonious man," he says in the "Laches," "is he who . . . is tuned to right living, whose deeds harmonize with his words, not in the Phrygian or Lydian measure, but in the Doric melody which is the only harmony of Hellas." The "good," then, with Socrates — and here lay his wonderful reforming power — was not some abstraction of fine-spun metaphysics (although it was the highest idea reason could reach), but

it was an ethics to be put into practice here and now, to rule all our actions and inspire all our thinking. So Aristotle says of Socrates, "He occupied himself with ethics."

The relation of Socrates's ethics to religion is summed up for us in his defence before the judges as recorded in the "Apology" of Plato. There he says that he has received a commission from Apollo to spend his life examining his countrymen to find out who is wise, and to convict such as seem to be wise, but are not, of their own ignorance. And under the stress of this commission, he says, he has no time either for state duties or for home duties, but is "in dire poverty through his service to the god." He claims divine guidance (especially a negative guidance of veto) in the shape of a voice or "demon," to which he yields implicit obedience. This demon counsels him not only in matters of great concern, such as restraining him from participating in politics, from preparing a speech in his defence when on trial for his life, from associating with certain persons who have deserted him, but seek to return to his society, or from leaving his prison at the solicitation of Crito; but it even descends to give advice in such seemingly trivial matters as whether Socrates shall leave the Lyceum or shall stay and meet Euthydemus for a conversation. Toward the

gods of the state Socrates seems to have assumed an attitude of compliance in worship — at least there is no trace, either in Xenophon or Plato, of polemic against the state religion; and Xenophon, in his zeal to demonstrate Socrates's innocence of the charge of impiety, makes his hero a consistent worshipper at the altars of the gods, and an impassioned advocate of the teleological proof of the existence of God. Probably Socrates did render the homage of a "natural religion" to Zeus and Apollo, the great divinities of his city, but it was rather a concession than a passion on his part. He removed the gods to the realm of the unsearchable, claiming that it was madness to expect them to do for us what we should do for ourselves. In substance, he accepted the new "free thought," and allowed religion no trespassing on the realm of the natural.

To sum up the doctrine of Socrates in a word, then, it was a revolt against the formless matter of the dogmatic physicists and the soulless form of the rhetoricians and sophists. From the half truths of the latter, he appealed to the whole truth of patient reason. He did not seek to return to the naïve polytheism of the previous century, or to turn back the shadow on the dial of human thought. He did not despair of knowledge because many were ignorant; neither did he condemn searching because many were shal-

low in judgment, rash in conclusions, and iconoclastic in spirit. He only said, "See to it that you are wise in your search." He did not separate knowledge from virtue, thus opening the door to all sorts of ethical sophistry and religious obscurantism; but he maintained (or rather he first clearly announced) the inspiring truth of the unity of human experience. Where Aristophanes bitterly condemned all innovations simply for their newness' sake, he welcomed, weighed, and criticised them to see what of lasting good there was in them. Where the sophists gloried in the newly discovered bankruptcy of dogmatism, hailing it as the liberation of the spirit from all obedience to law and order, he saw in the ominous fact only the warning to seek new and better foundations in thought for the eternally godlike in man. The song of the angels in Faust's choir rang in his ears too: —

> "Build again the shattered world,
> In thine own bosom build it anew."

He was the most religious man that ever trod the soil of Greece — infinitely more religious than the priestly leaders of the sacred processions which passed him on the street to go out by the Dipylon Gate to the temple of Eleusis, for the celebration of those mysteries into which he had declined to be initiated. For he saw through

and through the blighting, dehumanizing effect of all lip-service. "Virtue and humanity had descended upon him in their sublime purity, and had excited his unbounded veneration." His life was spent in the service of that true God whose worship is neither on this altar nor on that, but in the inmost heart of man.

IV

For this service the Athenians put Socrates to death. In his seventieth year an accusation of impiety was brought against him by three men who considered themselves injured by Socrates in their pride or in their business. The charge read, "Socrates sins by corrupting the youth and not worshipping the gods of the city, but introducing new divinities." The proceedings of the trial — Socrates's masterful extemporaneous apology, or defence, the vote of condemnation, the appeal, the imprisonment, and the last hours of Socrates before the fatal draught of hemlock — can all be read, and should all be read by every lover of what is eternal and sublime, in the pages of Plato's dialogues, the "Apology," the "Crito," and the "Phædo." With dignity and calm, scorning the usual theatrical methods of affecting his jury, Socrates told the Athenians that they were putting to death their best servant, one who had abandoned

all comforts and honours for the sake of serving them, by waking them to a knowledge of their moral responsibilities. He had no counter sentence to suggest against the sentence of death which the accusers proposed. For he was not rich enough to pay a fine, not anxious enough for mere existence to wish to finish in imprisonment the few years nature might have left for him, and not foolish enough to think that when his own citizens condemned him for examining and interrogating them, the people of those states into which he might go in exile would welcome him. But could he not just agree to stop his preaching and finish his years in quiet? His reply was grand. "If you should say now, 'O Socrates, we will not follow up the charge of Anytus, but will let you go free, but on this condition, that you should not continue your examining and philosophizing,' I should reply: 'I salute you, fellow-Athenians, and assure you of my esteem, but I shall obey God rather than you; and so long as the breath of life is left in my body I will not cease from philosophizing and from exhorting and catechising everybody I meet, saying (as has been my wont), My good man, you are an inhabitant of Athens, the most noted city of the world for wisdom and power; and aren't you ashamed then to set all your heart on possessions, such as wealth and office,

while you care nothing for insight and truth, and the excellence of your soul?'" So, there being no form of punishment which Socrates (according to his lawful right in the Athenian court) would propose as substitute for the death penalty, he concluded with fine irony that the judges might, in recognition of his life-long services to Athens, award him a seat at the state table in the hall of the Prytany. The suggestion was not calculated to mitigate the feelings of the jurors; and they brought in the verdict of the death sentence by a large majority. After waiting in prison until the sacred vessel had returned from Delos (no executions being permitted in the city during its absence), Socrates drank the cup of hemlock and lay down in calmness to meet the life of the just in another world or the eternal sleep of peace — he knew not which. "Thus," says Grote, "perished the *parens philosophiæ*, the first of ethical philosophers — a man who opened to science both new matter, alike copious and valuable, and a new method, memorable not less for its originality than for the profound philosophical basis on which it rests. Though Greece produced great poets, orators, speculative philosophers, historians, etc., yet other countries, having the benefit of Grecian literature to begin with, have nearly equalled her in all these lines, and surpassed her in some. But where are we to

look for a parallel to Socrates, either in or out of the Grecian world? . . . No man has ever been found strong enough to bend his bow, much less to wield it as he did."

Many reasons conspired to make Socrates hated of the Athenians: his utter independence, even to vagaries of dress in a city given over to conventionality; his hold on the young men, who doubtless abused his teaching often by assuming to instruct their fathers. We have an interesting passage in Xenophon's "Memoirs," where the young Alcibiades uses the Socratic method on his august father by adoption, Pericles. Again Socrates contemned the pompous scepticism of a large class of "enlightened" citizens who followed the lead of the sophists. Most galling of all, however, was his attitude to the state. Not only did he refrain from entering on active political duties, in obedience, he said, to the voice of his demon, but he even openly ridiculed the Athenian system of election by lot. The one occasion on which he was president of the senate he confessed that he did not know how to take the votes. When the Thirty Tyrants were ruling the city, he refused point blank to carry out their orders to join a deputation to Salamis to bring back a political offender, and would have probably lost his life for this contempt of authority had not the rule of the

Thirty been immediately overthrown. In the same spirit of independence he refused to put to vote the question of the condemnation of the ten generals who had abandoned the dead at Arginusæ, thus bringing the proceedings of the senate to a dead-lock. The archons and senators of Athens were elected by lot, white and black beans being drawn from a jar against the names of the candidates, the white bean electing. Socrates ridiculed the "bean rule" of Athens. He asked his hearers if they would be willing to trust the education of their sons to tutors chosen by lot, or even the training of their colts to grooms chosen by lot. Indifference or averseness to politics in our modern demagogue-ruled cities is not so great a crime in the eyes of the public, but in the democratic Athens of the fifth century, where every citizen was known and rated and expected to serve his term as juryman, senator, committeeman, etc., wilful abstinence from politics was almost treason. The historian Thucydides expresses the popular view in the famous funeral oration which he puts into the mouth of Pericles: "We call the man who cares not for the public weal a worthless nuisance and not merely an inoffensive citizen . . . for all citizens take a share of the public burdens and all are free to offer opinions on public concerns."

V

The faults for which Socrates was condemned were petty, local, and individual; the virtues which were overlooked by his self-righteous and self-sufficient countrymen were large, universal, and general. His doctrine, to be sure, had its shortcomings. In the complete identification of knowledge with virtue it overlooked the province of the will as distinct from the intellect; in its devotion to logical perfection it did not sufficiently recognize the struggle of the flesh against the spirit; in its refusal to treat of politics it neglected that wholesome connection with actual social conditions which philosophy cannot ignore. To substitute devotion to pure logic for love of one's fatherland, especially at a time when that fatherland was in the throes of a long, losing war, was a grave fault in Socrates—perhaps the gravest fault in him. Well! 1941

Yet for all this he was one of the world's greatest spiritual heroes. His work was nothing less than the creation of the problems of philosophy that have come down to our own day. He set the world the task of making ethics and metaphysics scientific, *i.e.* rational. "He brought philosophy from heaven to earth," said Cicero. He restored confidence in the truth, which had been shattered by the scepticism of

the philosophers, and obscured by the rhetoric of the sophists. He created intellectual freedom and the sense of true human dignity by turning the mind from speculations on atoms, number, and astute syllogisms to the contemplation of its own processes and powers. He found humanity, like the men in his own figure in the "Republic," bound in a cave with their back to the light, looking on the shadows of reality as they passed before their eyes. He freed them and turned them to the light itself.

In an evil hour for Athens, Socrates was condemned of impiety. But his death rendered forever obsolete the sort of piety which condemned him. That superstition has not held men's minds captive through the world's ages; that men have had the courage again and again to rise from the benumbing influence of belated authorities, and seek a new and vital expression for the convictions of the heart; that the reasonable has won its way by slow battle against the tyranny of the conventional, even to our own day; that to think clearly, patiently, boldly on every question that presents itself to our mind is the highest employment of our rational nature, and that the supremacy of that reason over all merely traditional and consecrated formulæ is wellnigh universally acknowledged—this all in the first instance is the merit of the barefooted,

scantily clad sage of Athens, who in the last hour of his life cheered his Theban companion on to the unflagging pursuit of virtue and insight, saying, "The prize is glorious, and the hope is large."

CHAPTER IV

JESUS, THE PREACHER OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

> "Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness;
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home."
>
> — WORDSWORTH.

I AM well aware that, in attempting to present the life of Jesus of Nazareth in a series of essays on the world's Spiritual Heroes, I become obnoxious in the judgment of many critics to the charge of reckless impiety. For nearly twenty centuries the name of the Nazarene, in the creeds and the consciousness of a majority of the peoples of advancing civilizations, has stood sundered from the names of all saints and heroes besides, the "name above all others," the name "to which every knee in heaven and earth shall bow." So cultured and impartial a critic even as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, for example, writes in his "Table Talk" under the date of January 3, 1834: "Is it fitting to run Jesus Christ in a silly parallel with Socrates: the being whom a thousand millions of intellectual creatures, of

whom I am an humble unit, take to be their Redeemer, with an Athenian philosopher, of whom we should know nothing except through his glorification in Plato and Xenophon?" And the accomplished author of a recent work on the "Theology of Modern Literature" expresses the sentiments of thousands of his fellow-believers when he complains that "the Son of Man is patronized with passing compliments and hailed with salaams of respectful salutation." Of Mr. Emerson this author writes: "He constantly perpetrates on Christ the gross indignity of classifying him with human notabilities; in a manner which sends a shudder of resentment and recoil through every admiring disciple of the Master, he invariably mentions him in the same breath with earthly competitors. Jesus is no more than many others whom he can name.

> "'Cæsar's hand and Shakespeare's strain,
> The Lord Christ's heart and Plato's brain'

are slumped together in vicious equalization, as if they all had precisely the same claim to the recognition and homage of mankind . . . but to twist the laurels of hero-worship around the spotless brow that once wore the crown of thorns is a degradation and an insult."

It is obvious that so long as such opinion of Jesus prevails, a biography or a biographical

sketch of Jesus is impossible; for biography means the description of a person's life, with the estimate of his purposes, the criticism of his methods, the appreciation of his problems, and the valuation of his services to mankind. A God on earth, whose purposes are hidden in the secrecy of the antemundane conferences of the Trinity, whose methods are all supernatural, and whose whole existence on earth is but the fulfilment according to Old Testament prophecy of a divine scheme of redemption, is not a subject for human estimate at all. Such a figure may be of prime importance for a theologian; for an historian it is useless.

Therefore, as we are trying to approach the great men of the world in the spirit of the historian, we must at the outset divest our minds of theological prejudice or bias, and attend, so far as time allows us, to the facts of Jesus' life and teaching. I am not concerned here to break a lance for the divinity of Christ, or to champion the "mythical theory" of Strauss. My interest is not to plead for the reality of miracles, or to assail the authenticity of the Gospels. Whether or not a legion of devils entered into a drove of Gadarean swine, whether or not the Apostle John wrote the Fourth Gospel, whether or not Jairus's daughter was raised to life, are questions which may

absorb the literary critic and the psychologist. For us, who seek to get an historical picture of Jesus of Nazareth as clear and consistent as possible, such questions are only disturbing and obscuring. We have in the Gospels four brief accounts of Jesus' life—our only source for that life. We shall use them as we would use any other historical documents, without theological prepossession and without cherishing that glaring logical inconsistency which has so often characterized the treatment of the Gospels—I mean resting the claim for the inspiration of the books on their apostolic authorship, and their apostolic authorship on the testimony of the books. Apostolic or non-apostolic, there the Gospels stand, and the estimate of the writings themselves, as of the marvellous life they portray, devolves on us as students of history, quite independently of any leaning toward Presbyterianism or agnosticism.

Having thus made clear the nature of our investigation, let us ask what we know of the life of Jesus.

I

Well on in the reign of the Emperor Augustus Cæsar, there was born in a carpenter's cottage at Nazareth a child whose coming into the world was destined to influence the world's history

more than the life of any other mortal who has ever lived. The child grew to manhood in the quiet atmosphere of the Galilean fields and hills, all unconscious of the world outside his little corner of it: of the great new world-empire with its capital on the Tiber; of the Roman governor in Palestine, and the clang of the legionary's armour echoed from the very walls of the sacred Temple; of the dissolute, discordant courts of Herod's sons on both sides of the Jordan. He probably worked at the bench in his father's shop through uneventful days, and when the evening came perhaps he often walked alone in the sapphire stillness of the Galilean sky, seeking he hardly knew what, but finding peace. The unfolding of the blossoms of religion in a soul growing to a consciousness of self and world, of iniquity, tragedy, responsibility, and hope, is a mystery impenetrable as the mystery of the birth of the flesh. We see the fact, the infant or the saint; but the power that makes the fact is hidden from us. Here, unless we be dead to finer feelings, we bow and adore. It is the Holy of Holies of the temple of humanity, this place where God meets the soul. Scholars have gone far afield to probe the consciousness of Jesus in these years, discoursing on Messianic premonitions, the interpenetration of human and divine natures, etc. But I do not think the

cause of Jesus' holiness is so far to seek, — a pious home, a faithful mother, days of honest work, and spiritual renewal ever at hand in the communion with God in nature. Not that this explains Jesus — far from it. Inspiration is not a thing to be explained: —

> "It droppeth like the gentle rain from heaven,"

and happy the man or woman whose soul is refreshed thereby!

Whether or not Jesus communicated to his neighbours the visions of his exquisite soul before the opening of the ministry recounted in our Gospels we do not know. A hint in St. Luke's account of the opening sermon of that ministry seems to indicate that Jesus had preached before. "And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up, and he entered *as his custom was* into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read." The Jewish synagogue service in Jesus' day was more like the Christian prayer meeting of to-day: anybody who felt the spirit move might rise, receive the Scripture at the hand of the attendant or "Hazzan," and, reading a passage, discourse on the same before the congregation. The meetings were especially democratic in the small towns, of course.

But whether Jesus had or had not appeared as a preacher before his sermon in the synagogue

of Nazareth, there occurred, probably soon after his thirtieth year, an event which determined him to devote his life to public teaching. There had appeared in the wilderness of Jordan a new prophet—one of those occasional reminders and renewers of Israel's hope of a Messiah. The people flocked to him to be baptized. The new prophet was clad in the garb of a hermit and preached with the hermit's fire and unsparingness. His text was: "The Christ, the Anointed (Messiah), Israel's deliverer, is coming. Repent, that he may find a people worthy to welcome him." "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John to be baptized of him." So the authentic Gospel opens.

The occasion of this visit of Jesus to John the Baptist, if not the specific ceremony of the baptism, formed a turning-point in Jesus' life. Here he saw hundreds of men and women "from Jerusalem and all Judæa" coming out to be baptized by the prophet. He saw what longings the preaching of a Messiah's coming stirred: how mighty was his nation's hope, and how deep its need for peace. He "went up into the wilderness," the record says, "and was tempted forty days by Satan." That is, after the enthusiasm of the baptism he withdrew to commune with his own soul, and a struggle arose in him whether he should accept the call to preach his

Gospel to Israel. The worldly, selfish life, the life of money and bread, was offered to him in place of the life of self-sacrifice in the spirit. "All these things will I give unto thee," said the tempter, "if thou wilt bow down to me." But Jesus won; and it was the victory of his life, I think, beside which the conquering of the pain in Gethsemane was trivial. "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The tempter was vanquished, and "angels came and ministered" unto the victor.

Jesus returned to Galilee, and began immediately to preach, as John had preached in the region about Jordan, that the Kingdom of God was at hand. The substance of Jesus' preaching I shall not go into in detail: we are all familiar with it in the parallel narratives of the three so-called Synoptic Gospels, — Matthew, Mark, and Luke. I would only remind one in one's reading of those Gospels that, as they stand they are literary compositions, with a distinctly (in the case of Matthew, even avowed) apologetic interest, compiled subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem under Titus in the year 70 (*i.e.* more than a generation after Jesus' death) and built up on two main original documents; namely, 1st, a collection of "Logia" or sayings of Jesus, written in the Aramaic dialect and attributed with every evidence

of genuineness to the Apostle Matthew; and 2d, a short account of the "words and deeds" of Jesus, reported by the Apostle Peter, and written out by a certain Mark. This second document we have good reason to believe is, in substance, our Gospel of Mark. Moreover, aside from the late and composite character of the Gospels, another more serious reason still forbids their being the satisfactory source of a truly scientific biography of Jesus. That is, that they do not pretend to be more than a group of selections from Jesus' discourses and deeds. There is no attempt in the Synoptic Gospels at chronology; for all we can judge from them, the ministry of Jesus in Galilee lasted about a single year (whereas in the Fourth Gospel, which has generally been accepted as representing more trustworthy tradition on this point, the ministry of Jesus occupies three years). Again there are obvious doublets, or repetitions of accounts of miracles, etc., in the Synoptics, such as the feeding of the five thousand and the four thousand on a few loaves of bread and two fishes. I mention these various discrepancies in the Gospels simply to show the difficulties which confront the scholar who attempts to write the life of Jesus. On the other hand, it is certain that, however much we have to desire in the matter of the details of Jesus' life as represented in the Synoptic Gos-

pels, we have there the spirit and substance of his teaching in substantial accuracy. We can follow, too, undoubtedly, in the Gospel of Mark, the general course of Jesus' ministry. The first stage of that ministry is marked by the fervid preaching of the Gospel of Repentance in view of the near coming of the Kingdom of God. The emphasis is all ethical. Precept upon precept, line upon line, the wonderful young carpenter of Nazareth brings to his fellow-countrymen the godlike truths that glow in his own soul. Blessed are the meek, the merciful, the thirsters after righteousness, the peacemakers, the pure in heart, the lowly in spirit. The Galileans flocked to hear him as he sat on the mountain side or pushed out a bit from the shore of the lake to get room for his voice and gesture. He spoke with power, and they were amazed at his teaching, asking one another, "Is not this the son of Joseph the carpenter?" Yet they "heard him gladly."

Gradually, we know not how in detail, the attitude of the people changed toward Jesus, and his popularity was succeeded by depreciation, hate, and desertion, till he was left with practically only the handful of fellow-workers he had chosen, the fishermen and peasants of Galilee. "Will ye also leave me?" he asks in a moment of pathetic anguish. And Peter, ever

ready with words, answers: "Master, to whom could we go? Thou alone hast the words of eternal life."

II

We may note two main factors in the development of the opposition against Jesus: 1st, his own claim (at least a tacit claim) to be the Messiah; and 2d, the machinations of the priests against him.

As Jesus felt more and more the weight of spiritual responsibility which those feel to whom the people look for guidance; and as he sank his spirit deeper and deeper into the God-soul, the eternal truths of the spirit—peace, love, righteousness, health, communion, trust—grew upon him till he saw only these. His countrymen were waiting for a Messiah to break the yoke of the Romans; he saw that the Messiah his people needed was not a girded champion of war, but a revealer of spiritual truth. Deliverance not from the Roman, but from the fires of sin and passion was what they needed. What profit to be ruler of the whole earth, and yet ruled one's self by the lust of the flesh and the tyranny of a wicked soul! What gain to be a feaster at the Messianic tables of flowing wine, while all the time the inner man was starving on the husks of perfunctory ritual and temple cere-

mony! No, he was Israel's deliverer, he who preached deliverance from evil and sonship with God. But the people wanted no such Messiah. They forsook him with angry murmurs. Will the carpenter, Joseph's son, be wiser than all our rabbis? His family thought him mad.

The second cause of Jesus' sudden unpopularity was the interference of the priests, chiefly the Pharisees, the stiff, literal, orthodox, intolerant legalists and traditionalists.

So long as a religious reformation of any sort is confined to narrow and obscure limits, and is upheld by the uninfluential and insignificant in society, it escapes persecution. Martin Luther, preaching his new gospel away up in the Saxon wilderness, was ignored by the court of Pope Leo X, until the pest of heresy began to spread among the stalled cattle of the Church. So the enthusiastic young rabbi of Nazareth, led by his unique passion for seeing God face to face, had departed far from the doctrine of the Jews before he was interfered with. In Judæa, in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem and the holy temple, he probably could not have preached his blasphemies (for such his ethical doctrines were when they declared the Law perfected and its ceremonies superseded by his own message) — he could not, I say, have preached these blasphemies a single week without paying for it with his life at the

hands of a band of angry zealots for the Law. For he had taught the incongruity of the old forms of worship — phylacteries, mint and cummin, the letter of the law and sacrifices — with the new doctrine of life. "Do men put new wine in old skins? Will not the new wine burst the old skins?" He had set up his authority against that of Moses, with the shocking calm and insolence of the phrase, "But *I* say unto you." He had publicly and ostentatiously broken the Jewish ceremonial law by eating with publicans and outcasts, and had shown his disregard for its inane prohibitions by using the Sabbath as he would any other day, for good and necessary works. "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," was his magnificent reply to his critics.

The priests were disturbed at last. They began to realize that something serious might ensue if the carpenter-preacher was allowed to continue his unlawful and even blasphemous teachings. That anything either good or bad could come out of Galilee, "the vestibule of the heathen," they had not realized. Now at last they thought it would be best to silence the voice which presumed to pronounce forgiveness of sins and immunity from ceremonies. To facilitate the destruction of Jesus they enlisted the followers of Herod, governor of Galilee, against him — the

same Herod who had beheaded John the Baptist and was thrown into mortal fright by the rumours that John was risen from the dead and lived again in Jesus. "And the Pharisees," says Mark's Gospel, "straightway took counsel with the followers of Herod against Jesus, how they might put him to death."

Brought face to face with the crisis of his ministry in the consolidation of the hatred against him and the ripening of his inner consciousness to the point where he saw he must accept and use the title of Messiah, Jesus had no course left but to throw off all obscurity in word and act, and carry his Gospel to Jerusalem, to the heart of the Jewish world, there to meet its fate. He was too wise and discreet a man not to know that this move would cost him his life, for he had seen the Pharisee in Galilee, and knew what more he had to expect in Jerusalem. Nevertheless Jesus did not shrink from the duty put upon him. "He set his face steadfastly to go up to Jerusalem." The disciples, deeply attached to him, tried to detain him from his plan; but he rebuked their spokesman, Peter, with severe words, "Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savourest not of the things of God but of the things of the world." The journey to Jerusalem is recorded in detail only by Luke, the third evangelist; and the chapters of Luke's

Gospel (9–18) in which it occurred are, with the Sermon on the Mount and the Last Discourse in John, the finest part of the whole Gospel narrative: they contain the famous parables of the Prodigal Son, the Lost Sheep, the Lilies of the Field, and the Marriage Feast.

For the ministry of Jesus at Jerusalem we follow with preference the detailed account of the Fourth Gospel. The Synoptic tradition is Galilean, and the Synoptic writers devote only about one-fourth of their narrative to the events connected with the conflict, the passion, the arrest, and the death of Jesus at Jerusalem. In the Gospel of John, on the contrary, the ratio is just reversed, not a fourth part of the narrative being devoted to the Galilean ministry. The writer of John followed a Judæan tradition.

It was autumn, the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, when Jesus went up to Jerusalem; but it was not till the Feast of Dedication in December that the crisis with the Pharisees came. I quote a short passage from the tenth chapter of John.

"And it was the feast of Dedication at Jerusalem: it was winter, and Jesus was walking in the Temple in Solomon's porch. The Jews then came around him and said to him, 'How long dost thou hold us in suspense? If thou art the Christ (Messiah) tell us plainly.'" For answer

Jesus maintained his commission from the Father, saying, "I and my Father are one." "Thereupon the Jews took up stones to kill him."

Jesus was obliged to bend before the storm of hatred his words had caused, and he retired for a time beyond the Jordan. But the truce was only temporary. News reached the city of the miracles of Jesus, especially the raising of Lazarus to life. "Then the chief priests and Pharisees gathered a council and said, What shall we do? For this man doeth many wonders. If we let him alone all men will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away our city and our nation." Then Caiaphas, the high priest, advised that it was expedient that one man rather than the whole people should perish. ". . . So the Jews took counsel how they might put Jesus to death." The sporadic choleric attempts at assassination were succeeded by a matured plan to arrest Jesus and accuse him before the Sanhedrin and the judgment seat of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor.

The opportunity came in Easter week. Jesus returned to the city to celebrate the Passover. He was hailed as Messiah by his followers as he entered Jerusalem. The anger of the Jews was doubled. They entered into negotiations

with Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus' disciples, to betray the Master for thirty pieces of silver. Jesus had been taking his last meal before the Passover, with the disciples in an upper chamber in the city. After the meal the little company went out and down through the valley of Kedron to the garden of Gethsemane, a favourite spot, where Jesus entered to pray alone. The band of soldiers hired by the chief priests and Pharisees, and guided by the traitor Judas, surprised Jesus and the disciples here. Peter was for resisting; he drew his sword and smote one of the company, cutting off his ear. But Jesus enjoined peace, and submitted to the band of soldiers, who bound him and took him away to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, and the head of the priestly party.

The trial and accusation of Jesus followed forthwith. The charge brought against him was "seduction of the people," according to the law contained in the Talmud. Jesus was prosecuted as a deceiver and a blasphemer. One will recall the charges against Socrates.

The Roman governor Pilate, with whom the power of life and death over Jewish citizens lay, seems to have done all in his power, as a disinterested party, to preserve the life of Jesus. He examined Jesus, found no cause of offence in him, recommended scourging and release for

him; but at last, urged on by the insistent demands of the Jews, and frightened by the threats of reports to Rome and Cæsar of the toleration of an upstart who had called himself "King," Pilate yielded, and gave permission for the execution of the prisoner. Jesus, after suffering the utmost indignities at the hands of his triumphant prosecutors, was forced himself to carry his own cross, till his strength failed, toward the place selected for his death, the hill of the skull, *Golgotha*. They nailed him to the cross, and on either side of him they crucified a miscreant wretch. From the third hour till the ninth hour, he hung in agony on the cross, still subjected to the taunts of the ribald crowd. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me," was the only cry of anguish wrung from his heart. Then peace came again in the pain, and he died with words of pardon and prayer for his murderers on his lips, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

III

It is a hard thing to come near to the spirit of the heroes of this life. The great men, the great servants who give themselves wholly to a divine idea, that it may triumph in humanity, give themselves without respite, regret, or regard for self; they have an experience of life

which we who so feebly imitate them cannot hope to penetrate. In the words of Jesus himself they have "bread to eat that *we* know not of." And still we must strive to know them, for they are a more precious possession than silver or gold, renown or erudition. To know them and their problems is to know human history, and to appreciate them in true sympathy is alone wisdom. So we must strive to know this wonderful man of Nazareth, upon whose thorn-encircled head a near posterity put the crown of divinity. We must not, either for our enthusiasm to maintain his exaltation to the office of a heavenly mediator, or for our zeal in combating the Platonic exaggeration of his Godhood, lose sight of his marvellous life in Galilee two thousand years ago, and his lasting service to the human race.

Jesus found definite problems facing him when he began to preach his spiritual doctrine of deliverance from sin, fear, and slavery, through a complete sonship with God as a Heavenly Father; and he had to meet those problems as a public teacher. He found certain religious customs in vogue among his countrymen: the priestly sacrifices, the ceremonies of the temple and synagogue, the performance of various duties of purification, festal observances, etc. He found definite and jealous

authorities among his people, the Law of Moses (*Torah*), a collection of sacred literature containing Psalms, Prophecies, Proverbs, Apocalypses, etc., besides the Law, and a mass of rabbinical sophistry which was held among the Pharisees in equal esteem with the Law itself. He found, finally, certain deep-rooted doctrines to which the Jews held with passionate tenacity: the doctrine of the divine preëminence of Israel the nation, of a Messiah coming to free them from the yoke of political servitude, of a great judgment day, on which Israel should be vindicated, and the Gentiles cast into outer darkness, of a resurrection of the pious dead, and of a Messianic kingdom on earth to last a thousand years, in which the faithful of the nation should reign with God's Anointed, and the earth should yield miraculous fruits.

Jesus met all these problems with a consistency of doctrine which shows how utterly the spiritual religion of realized sonship with God had possessed his life. To all questions of ceremony, authority, and belief he applied the single standard of a will brought into harmony with the Father's will. "He that willeth to do his will, shall know of the doctrine." He never allowed the comfortable sophistry to stand that by a sacrifice on some altar the meanness or unworthiness of the soul could be remedied. If a

man made over to the priesthood the money that should have gone to support his old father or mother, thus taking advantage of the Pharisees' sophistry to save his wealth, Jesus recalled him to the true spirit of the command, "Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother." If a man brought his gift to the altar, and at the same time had anger in his heart toward any of his brethren, Jesus taught him to leave his gift and depart and be reconciled to his brother, then come and make his offering. The ceremony was nothing; the spirit everything. Jesus reset the values of life in the well-nigh forgotten terms of the ancient Hebrew prophets: "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a vexation unto me. . . . Cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." "I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offering." "What does the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly before thy God?" The Gospel of Jesus is in these words. It is a vain question to ask what is new in religion; the only question vital is, How has the eternally true been lived, and how brought home to others that they may live it?

In respect to the authorities of the Jews, Jesus used the same simple standard of judgment as he

did in the case of their ceremonies. Wherever he found the law sanctioning a lower stage of moral life than his Gospel called for, he did not hesitate to declare Moses superseded (he called it "fulfilled") in himself. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." The *lex talionis* — "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" — he rejected as unworthy of the sons of a Heavenly Father who sends his rain and his sunshine on good and bad alike. More than this, he rose constantly from the dead letter of the law to the living spirit of it, the heart motive behind the act. Hatred in the soul, the impudent look, mental reservation in a vow, were as bad in his sight as the murdering blow, the act of sedition, or the lie direct. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body is full of light." The service of God was too engrossing an employment to leave room for the cavillings and casuistry of the Pharisees. Religion for Jesus was not a doctrine which resulted from the faithful perusal of the Law nor a sum of accumulated ceremonial merits to offset possible charges of transgression on the Judgment Day. It rose above these petty considerations of fear and

logic. It moved in the sphere of the spirit, in an atmosphere of liberty, confidence, and love. It was not fearful for the morrow what it might bring forth, for it knew that he who cares for the sparrow and the lilies cares much more for his children. It heard the Father's sweet whisper, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." For a son in his father's house and in his father's love there are no authorities beyond the voice of filial duty. So Jesus taught that the Sabbath, yes and all the Law, was made for man, and not man for the prescriptions of the Law.

It was above all else this quiet and bold superiority to the Jewish Law that earned for Jesus the hatred and persecution of his countrymen. Wanting in the inspiration which impelled him to burst the artificial constraints of arbitrary authorities, they interpreted his independence of spirit as arrogance, and his departure from ceremonial bondage as blasphemy.

Jesus moved, as we have said, in the atmosphere of certain deep-rooted doctrines and beliefs of his day. The chief of these were the expectation of the Messiah, and the doctrine of the Resurrection. Can we say that Jesus applied to these doctrines, as to the ceremonies and authorities which confronted him in his preaching, the same norm of spiritual rigour? This is the most

interesting question, historically, for the student of the life of Jesus, and it sums itself up in the doctrine of the Kingdom of God, of which the Messiah was to be the inaugurator, and the Resurrection the enjoyment. Libraries have been written on Jesus' doctrine of the Kingdom. The name *Kingdom of Heaven* has been the shibboleth for all sorts of social Utopias and millennial dreams; it has been inscribed on the banners of social reform and social revolution for eighteen hundred years.

The Messiah of the Jews was to come with pomp and power, God's anointed one. He was to overthrow the hated dominion of Rome and make the Holy City of Palestine the capital of the nations. He was to inaugurate an era of unprecedented prosperity, shared by all the just of Israel's past, who rose in the first resurrection. And finally, earth and heaven having passed away, he was to rule forever in a new heaven, surrounded by the twelve tribes of Israel, whose patriarchs sat on twelve thrones. "And the names of the tribes should be a hundred and forty and four thousand." And after the tribes should come "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindred and peoples and tongues."

Was Jesus such a Messiah, and did he found such a kingdom? Assuredly not! And yet he

did not deny that he was the Messiah of Israel, and constantly spoke of his Kingdom or the Kingdom of God. We must find the solution of this seeming contradiction between the words Jesus used and the meaning he gave them partly in the universal need of speaking in the language of one's environment, and partly in Jesus' conviction that his mission was in truth the fulfilment of all that Israel should wait for. A religious teacher in the Palestine of Jesus' day could no more help speaking in the language of the Law and the Kingdom than Socrates could help speaking in the language of the sophists, or Martin Luther in that of the monks; or, to use a more modern parallel, than a religious teacher of to-day can help speaking in the language of critical, biblical scholarship and social service. And furthermore, no religious teacher of Jesus' day could claim to be listened to as the bearer of a divine message unless he presented himself as Israel's Messiah and spoke of his Kingdom.

These considerations are sufficient, in my judgment, to explain those passages of the Gospels in which Jesus is reported as indorsing the apocalyptic views of the Messianic kingdom which are found in the writings of later Judaism: the Books of Daniel, Enoch, and the Fourth Esdras, the Sibylline Books, the Psalms of Solomon, and the Assumption of Moses. That the cataclysmic kingdom was

not the true Kingdom of Heaven in Jesus' mind we have overwhelming evidence not in one passage, but in many, of the Gospels. He constantly spoke of the Kingdom as something now present; and whether we translate the famous passage of St. Luke as "The Kingdom of God is *within* you," or "The Kingdom of God is *among* you," the sense is still some present, immediate blessing, and not the expectation of a far-off event. In his parables, too, which we must feel are the very quintessence of his doctrine, Jesus speaks of the Kingdom always as a present, growing, spiritual treasure. It is the grain of mustard seed quietly unfolding into the large plant; it is the leaven gradually leavening the whole measure of wheat; it is the grain growing alongside of the tares until the harvest. It is a present blessing which the Pharisees with their deadening legalism shut up against men. It is a marriage feast to which the king even now bids those from the highways and the byways welcome. It is a present dispensation of free sonship with God in which the least member is greater than the greatest of the old dispensation of Law and sacrifice.

Thus we must recognize that even the idea of the Messianic Kingdom was clothed with a new spiritual meaning in Jesus' teaching. His doctrine of life was not a consequence drawn from

his dogma of the Kingdom, but his dogma of the Kingdom was interpreted in his doctrine of life. The Messianic idea was not the governing idea with Jesus. *It was a problem for him, not an inspiration.* He rejected all implication of majesty as David's son, and compelled his Pharisaic inquisitors to confess that David himself called the real Messiah Lord; "How is he then his son?" With these words the Kingdom of Heaven was opened to all believers, Jew or Gentile. They were the inspiration of St. Paul; they were the charter of the Christian Church; they are the text of a universal religion.

IV

We have seen how Jesus subjected the entire religious system of his countrymen, its observances, its authorities, and its dogmas to a searching ethical criticism based on the unshakable conviction of sonship with a Heavenly Father. In this we must recognize him as one of the hardiest religious innovators the world has ever seen. Yet so great was his tact and so perfect his balance that he made destruction appear like fulfilment. With a divine consistency and persistency that will be the wonder of humanity through all time, he seized on the essential spiritual truth of every situation and every doctrine, and gave it to the world in a form so simple that

a child may understand it. He did not allow himself to be drawn aside from his grand purpose and become involved in minor controversies. He was not an ascetic, though he rose above all temptations of the flesh; he was not a preacher of social revolution, though he constantly spoke of the dangers of riches; he did not make capital out of the world's misery, though he blessed the poor and needy; he did not antagonize culture, labour and prosperity, though he asked what profit there was if one "gained the whole world and lost his own soul." He spoke always as one who has become fully persuaded in his own mind of the supreme good of life, and has bartered all else for that good — "the pearl of great price." Nowhere do we find hurry, anxiety, or struggle in his nature. A deep peace, complete trust in a Heavenly Father, a satisfying joy of sonship, and a confident belief in every man's and woman's power and need to turn from selfishness and worldliness, and become, like him, a child of God — these simple but vivifying principles seem to have been all his Gospel. He did not shrink from the furthest consequences of his Gospel, whether they involved the holiest customs and beliefs of his people; and withal there was nothing of the bitter dialectician or the nagging controversialist in him. He had no anxiety for his doctrine, only a great desire to

spread its blessings as far and wide as possible. His enthusiasm was undisturbed by any misgiving that his mission might fail. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." And this was because his word was not of himself, but of the Father who sent him.

The idea of God that had prevailed until Jesus' time was the idea of power. Justice was the Old Testament attribute of Jehovah. Jealousy was his attitude and wrath his punishment. The righteousness his servants sought was right ceremonies, right commandments, right belief. The way of approach to him was through sacrifice and priesthood. The boon asked of him was grace, pardon, and pity. He was a monarch, King and Lord of heaven and earth, and greatly to be feared. Jesus replaced that idea by a God of Love, a God who was not a monarch but a Father, who ruled not alone in heaven, but in the human heart as well, whose punishment was only correction, whose law was not in a thousand commandments of hand-washing, mint-tithing, Sabbath-keeping, etc., but in one great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself."

In freeing religion thus of all external notes and vouchers of righteousness, and placing the

entire content of it in the good-will, Jesus inaugurated the only form of religion which is capable of universality. For it is only as the bizarre, the miraculous, the sacerdotal, the visible retire before inner conviction of moral faith, that superstition (which means "survivalism") can vanish. It is only then that the human soul realizes its import and sanctity as a moral agent, absolutely bound to follow the dictates of an educated conscience, whether they agree or disagree with traditional ceremony or cult. Jesus spoke the grand word which should long ago have been, and which will some day be, the fulfilled prophecy of a universal religion: "The hour cometh and now is"—*cometh* for the world, *is* now for me and you that hear me —"when the true worshipper shall worship God neither in Jerusalem nor on this mountain . . . but in spirit and in truth. . . . For God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." Beyond these words religion cannot advance. They are absolute. Spirit and truth; not a word of temple, altar, song, prayer, sacrifice, creed, church, or book. All the creeds and standards of religion separate men; indeed, as they stand in their present form, they were all devised for the purpose of exclusion. Only Jesus' formula can unite men, "In spirit and in truth"; that is in

constant willingness to seek and know God's will, and frank concern to do it.

For teaching such a doctrine, and for exemplifying it by his life, Jesus holds the highest rank among the world's religious teachers. In the words of Renan, "He founded religion, as Socrates founded philosophy and as Aristotle founded science" — not in the sense that there were not philosophy and science before Socrates and Aristotle; but in this sense, that in Socrates and Aristotle all previous science and philosophy were superseded by a method, an ideal, which has never been, and we feel will never be, superseded. In Jesus we have the absolute type of the religious man. He is greater than Jeremiah because his Gospel is free from any complication with the state, and his relation to God is conceived as mediator, not for a nation, but for humanity. He is greater than Socrates, because he set purity and holiness of life above all perfection of logic. He is greater even than the Buddha, because he taught that desire was not to be starved by creating a vacuum in the soul, but was to be ennobled and sanctified; because he knew and loved and trusted a Father in Heaven and looked forward in perfect confidence to the triumph of the Kingdom of Heaven. In short Christianity, as Jesus taught it, was more than prophecy, more than theology, more than

philosophy — it was *life*. Christianity, as the historic Church has interpreted it, has lapsed continually into one or another of these lower forms of teaching. It has become a prophecy again, or a theology, or a theosophy. It has "imprisoned the spirit in a sounding word" or smothered inspiration beneath an incubus of definition. It has fallen again and again under the tyranny of the *Zeitgeist*, and set up its temples on Zion or Gerizim with a shout of, "Lo here!" It has languished under the blight of sacerdotalism and the curse of professionalism. The Scribes and Pharisees have sat in Jesus' seat, even as he once complained they sat in Moses' seat. But it is not from them that we should learn the meaning of Jesus of Nazareth to the world. Seek not his doctrine in the pomp of ecclesiasticism, or the ponderous volumes of theologians, or the manifold creeds of Christendom; but read the Gospels, — those marvellous extracts from his words and deeds, and ask what manner of man this Jesus was.

One will find there a man whose religious idea was single and absorbing: as a child of God you must not stay in piteous exile from your Father's home. One will find a teacher whose glory consists not in having said something which no other man could have imagined, but in having spoken with final simplicity and power the word

that is nearest to every humblest mortal heart, the one word *love.*

I remember that, speaking not as a preacher but as a biographer, my task is to point to a figure of history, not to an object of worship. And yet when one touches on the highest and holiest that history has to show, there is a quickening of the pulse and a bating of the breath. I confess that without the life and work of Jesus of Nazareth, religion, the supreme treasure of humanity, were to me a sealed book. And shall I make acknowledgment to the masters of art and letters, of thought and invention, and not much more bring the homage of transcendent wonder to this master of the art of arts, the art of living the eternal life of peace and holiness amid the world's strife and sham and fever?

V

Jesus died as he had lived, unnoticed by the great Roman world; a single word on the persecution of his followers found here and there in the Roman writers of the first and second centuries — that is all. And in the writings of his countryman, almost his contemporary, Josephus, the historian of the Jews, but one passage of pathetic briefness, "And when Pilate had put

him to death, those who had loved him before ceased not to love him."

Perhaps, Josephus did not write the words. Critics say they are a late insertion in his book. At any rate, that sentence is the history of Christianity in one prophetic utterance; it is the testimony to a life given wholly to the discovery and nurture of what is godlike in humanity.

Criticism at last has no gradations for such men. Estimates, comparisons, laudations, seem equally trivial and futile in the end. And yet as we dwell the longer in the presence of this wonderful Jesus, the prophet of humanity, his majesty and peace, his purity and power, grow insensibly into the very tissue of our soul; and we come back to his own form of speech at last to designate him truly, Among those born of women there hath not arisen a greater than Jesus of Nazareth.

CHAPTER V

ST. PAUL, THE APOSTLE OF A UNIVERSAL RELIGION

"First you must know human nature and its passions."
—PLATO.

SOCIALISM, the principle of association or solidarity, is the watchword of the coming age. What the English poet has happily called "the sense of oneness with our kind" is growing daily in the hearts of all classes of men. Despite the mad rush for wealth and the manifold temptations to accumulate goods at another's expense, the doctrine of those who believe that the many should have fair chance of enjoying what the many are forced to labour to produce, is gaining ground quietly, rapidly. But the duty of the prophets of socialism or solidarity (for words acquire the taint often of quite unmerited opprobrium) is not done when men's consciences have been aroused to respond: I *am* my brother's keeper. Through me none shall lose his fair claim to food and raiment. There are blessings higher than bodily ease and material opulence, and for the mediation of these blessings also to

those who hunger for them the complete prophet of solidarity must labour. I mean the blessings of instruction and inspiration, the stirring lessons of history, the challenge to conscience of the lives of just men, the joy of thinking noble thoughts after the world's sages, the birthright of labouring together with the world's prophets to know the meaning of life and the destiny of man. These are high concerns: they alone are worthy of the labour of an immortal spirit; they are the supreme blessing of life.

It is the bane of many of our religions and sects that they tend to monopolize great spiritual heroes of the past. Men who felt themselves ambassadors to humanity entire, to Jew, Greek, and barbarian, to bond and free; men like the Buddha and Jesus, Augustine and Martin Luther, are preëmpted by a church or sect and made to serve conventicles. It will be the increasing duty of the prophet of solidarity to free these men, too, from the long monopoly of the few and restore them to the knowledge, appreciation, and love of the many.

I

Saul of Tarsus has especially suffered by the jealous and exclusive patronage of the Christian Church. His Epistles, those marvellous masterpieces of ethical and religious instruction, have

been bound up in a holy volume and turned over almost entirely to the theologian. His doctrine, always vital and rooted in the soil of experience, has been artificially shaped into a preposterous scheme of salvation as a bargain between a tyrant God and rebellious man. And his name and influence have been thus used for eighteen hundred years to reënforce the very claims of authority which he spent his life to abrogate; namely, a law imposed from without, whether in the name of parchment, church, or priest. Even Protestantism, which made its boast of St. Paul, failed, as Matthew Arnold has forcibly shown, to appreciate the genius of St. Paul. He was a prophet of the spirit: they made him the doctor of the letter; he was the apostle of liberty: they made him the gauge of conformity. And so thoroughly have the theologians succeeded in identifying St. Paul with Lutheranism and Calvinism that even so keen a critic as M. Renan has been deceived. He writes in his "Saint Paul," "After having been for three hundred years, thanks to Protestantism, the Christian doctor *par excellence*, Paul is now coming to the end of his reign."

The real Paul is never coming to the end of his reign; at least, so long as conscience and the will to follow it are realities in men. His influence on humanity is undying, because

he wrestled with the eternally human to bring that into harmony with the eternally godlike; and his works are classics forever, because the eloquence, pathos, logic, zeal, and hope of an unfaltering conviction are in them. When the doubly liberating force of historical study and theological reform shall have had its full work upon St. Paul, his reign as the patron saint of Calvinism may indeed be at an end; but his reign as a prophet of humanity will be at last inaugurated. His kingdom is not of the conventicle!

A further general observation must be made before we pass to the story of the life and work of St. Paul in detail; that is, that St. Paul belongs to a different class of spiritual heroes from those we have been discussing till now. Genius is of two sorts, — creative and mediative, intuitive and philosophic, original and interpretative. Not that these two sorts of genius are mutually exclusive: one may contain much of the other; but one generally predominates in a striking way over the other. Elijah, Amos, Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, Mohammed, are of the first class. They are essentially seers: they leave others to write books; they speak to men direct. The other class of genius is reflective rather than spontaneous. Its representatives are Plato, St. Paul, Augustine, Kant. These men are concerned first of all to be understood:

they write laborious volumes to relate their doctrine to all possible experience; they will show *why* rather than declare *that;* the seer in them yields to the philosopher. They are not lesser geniuses, perhaps, than those of the first class; they are different geniuses. This distinction may help us to understand the great man whom we are studying in this chapter.

Saul or Shaül (Hebrew, *Desired*) was a Hebrew, born of Hebrew parents, of the tribe of Benjamin in Tarsus, a Greek city of Asia Minor, which was of enough importance in the first century to be compared with Athens and Alexandria by the geographer Strabo, and which even as far back as the year 401 B.C. is mentioned by Xenophon in the famous *Anabasis* as "a large and prosperous city of Cilicia." In addition to his pure Jewish stock and cosmopolitan birthplace, Saul enjoyed the rare advantage of Roman citizenship by right of birth. How this honour and protection came into the family of the Benjamite, we do not know: perhaps it was the reward of faithful services to the great Pompey in his campaigns in the East.

Of Saul's early life and training we know only the scanty bits told here and there in his letters, and in the Acts of the Apostles: that he was educated a strict Pharisee, that he studied under Gamaliel in Jerusalem, that he was

zealous for the law to an extreme, that he took part in the murder of the first Christian martyr, Stephen, that he persecuted the new sect of the followers of Jesus mercilessly, haling men and women before the judgment seat — in a word, we have in the young Saul of Tarsus a fiery zealot for the traditions of his fathers, impatient of the liberalism of Gamaliel, and importunate for letters of marque and reprisal against the Christians.

It was when armed with such a letter from the high priest against the "saints" of Damascus that Saul, journeying northward for its execution, was struck from his horse at noonday, and in the midst of a blinding light saw the vision of Christ, which turned him from the persecutor of the new religion into the preacher of the new religion. The conversion of Saul was probably a year or so only after the death of Jesus, and the age of the new convert to the religion of the Cross was about thirty.

From Saul's conversion (which is recounted three times in the Book of Acts) until his arrival as a prisoner at Rome some twenty-five years later, we can follow the course of the apostle's life with fairly satisfactory data from the Book of Acts and his own Epistles (notably Galatians and II Corinthians). But with Paul's entry into the city of the Cæsars,

where "he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling preaching the Kingdom of God . . . none forbidding him," the narrative of the Book of Acts breaks off abruptly, and we are thrown upon Catholic tradition for the remainder of his life. According to this tradition he was freed from his captivity, he preached the Gospel "as far as the boundaries of the Occident," he was reimprisoned at Rome, and finally suffered martyrdom with his colleague, Peter, under the tyrant Nero, being decapitated (since he was a Roman citizen and could not be crucified) at the place now named the Three Fountains on the Ostian Way. Scholars outside the Roman Church are generally against the release of Paul and the second captivity; but the tradition of the martyrdom under Nero is universally respected.

The presence of Paul was far from commanding. His Corinthian enemies, he says, called him weak in physical appearance, and of no account in speech, though strong in his letters. He himself confesses to rudeness in speech, though not in knowledge, and speaks continually of "bodily infirmities," "a thorn in the flesh," "a hindrance from the Spirit," etc. Many have thought that Paul suffered from partial blindness, and even from epilepsy. The description of his person in the Apocryphal Acts of Paul and Thekla rep-

resents him as small but vigorous in stature, bow-legged, bald-headed, with a long nose, and a penetrating gray eye beneath a knotted brow. "He had sometimes the face of a man," the passage quaintly adds, "and sometimes the face of an angel." Obviously, the description is worth as much as the traditions of Jesus with his flowing hair and his forked auburn beard.

For all the weakness of his bodily presence there must have been something majestic in the bearing of the brave pioneer of Christianity as he stood in chains covered with the scars of twenty years' service in shipwreck, scourgings, perils in city and country, among friends and foes, before the Roman governor Festus, and the puppet King Agrippa. For those intense gray eyes burned with the fire which makes insignificance commanding, and defeat, nay death itself, defiant — the flame of devotion absolute and unflinching to a truth of conscience. St. Paul had won the irresistible power of those who have once for all given their lives, with utter self-effacement, to a great and sustaining cause.

II

The new method in history and theology seeks a law of continuity and development; it is permeated with evolutionary principles; it is preëminently biographical, *i.e.* a study of *life.*

For centuries the Christian world had been indifferent to the fact that a stirring drama was enacted in the soul of Saul of Tarsus through twenty years of the most enduring work the world has seen, — the establishment of the Christian Church. It had been enough to take the writings of St. Paul and make a new theology out of them to supersede the theology of the Jewish rabbis and the Roman augurs. Paul the man was was lost in Paul the saint; the missionary was forgotten in the theologian. And yet St. Paul himself never called himself rabbi, theologian, philosopher, or system-builder; but rather the servant of Christ, missionary to the Gentiles, and fellow-labourer with all the preachers of that Kingdom of God which Jesus inaugurated. The doctrine of Paul is not the root, but the fruit of his experience; and it is an error historically, biographically, and psychologically to explain the man by the doctrine, and not the doctrine by the man. It is the human spirit that has life and growth and productive force. Syllogisms of logic are merely passive tools of thought.

If we ask, then, what was the dominant trait of St. Paul's nature, what is the key to the understanding of his experience, I think we shall find the answer, with the French critic Sabatier, in the single word *earnestness*. Moral

earnestness, the passion for righteousness, characterized Saul of Tarsus throughout his life; and the vision on the road to Damascus only diverted, but did not destroy or create, the immense spiritual energies of the man. It was the passion for righteousness (the righteousness of the Jewish Law) that took him to the feet of Gamaliel and that sent him away again, dissatisfied with Gamaliel's liberalism, to persecute the followers of the man who had declared the Law fulfilled in himself; just as it was the passion for righteousness (the righteousness of faith) which led him later to endure far greater persecution than he had ever inflicted for the sake of that same man and his new Gospel. St. Paul, before as well as after his conversion to Christianity, saw all the value of life in religion, as every spiritual hero the world over has done; and furthermore, he saw all the value of religion in righteousness, in the harmony of spiritual experience with ethical aspiration. It was only because Christ was the promise and earnest of righteousness, whereas the Law was only a reminder of unrighteousness, that Paul forsook the Law for Christ. His whole doctrine consequently centres in the person of Christ; not, however, a fictitious, theological, intangible, idol-like, priest-possessed Christ, but a real, present, and universal principle of spiritual deliverance

from evil and the fear of evil, and spiritual nurture in righteousness and the fruits of righteousness. The object which to the doctors of the Church has been often only a term in the immoral transaction between God and man, the Second Person of an unintelligible Trinity, a name at whose mention the knee should bend in the liturgy, or a figure to evoke sterile raptures in the mystic, was to St. Paul the sanest reality of existence. This Christ was the true man, the eternal man in his heavenly, God-given majesty, the second Adam, type to which all humanity should conform, promise, pledge, and fulfilment of a spiritual nature — the end of creation. The "office" of Christ, his "sacrifice," his "priesthood," his "intercession," and all like terms so primal in the theology of the Church, are of little moment to Paul; his concern is to be found in Christ's image, to adopt his righteousness and be found clothed upon with that righteousness. Hear him in his own majestic words: "Yea, verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may gain Christ and be found in him, having as my righteousness not that which is of the law, but . . . the righteousness which is of God by faith. . . . If ye then were raised with Christ, seek

the things that are above where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God; set your mind on things that are above and not on things that are on the earth. . . . Mortify your members . . . put away anger, wrath, malice . . . put off the old man and his doings . . . put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of the Creator . . . forbear, forgive, and above all these things put on a love which is the bond of perfectness. . . . Till we all attain unto . . . the full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ . . . and speaking the truth in love may grow up in all things into him which is the head, even Christ." Could the announcement of a religious programme be simpler or saner: the old man with his selfish sins and passions crucified and buried with Christ; the new man arising triumphant in the eternal Christ-righteousness to live in freedom forevermore? Righteousness and Christ, now and forever, one and inseparable! That is the final word in St. Paul's religion.

But we have seen that St. Paul was an argumentative genius; he was cast in the philosopher's mould. It was not enough for him to declare a truth; he must also justify it. He found his new principle in conflict with all the currents of thought and life, Jewish and Greek, of his time. How he developed, fought for,

pleaded for, died for that principle, forms the stirring story of his career. We can only briefly indicate the problems which St. Paul met when he entered the Græco-Roman world and the Jewish synagogue with his doctrine of salvation through conformity to the life, sufferings, and death of a crucified Nazarean peasant.

In the first place, the Græco-Roman world of the first century was very much alive to questions of religion. It was an age of revival. The effects of Alexander's conquests in the East three centuries before were first felt with all their force in the new empire of the Cæsars. Over the tracks levelled by the spread of Hellenism, the old religions of the interior had come westward to the Mediterranean and the centres of Greek learning. The result was the opening of an era of syncretism and amalgamation. The philosophy of the West was leavened with the religions of the East. At the same time the impetus given to the national religion of Rome by the consolidation of the empire under the pious Augustus Cæsar stayed for a time the scepticism which in the latter years of the republic threatened the destruction of all the altars, and went hand in hand with the moral awakening in the Stoic philosophers. The best thought of the first century, in its metaphysical aspect, was Platonic; in its moral

aspect, Stoic. A universal theology, therefore, such as St. Paul was confident he had, must satisfy the religious demands of Platonism and Stoicism.

Now the corner-stone of the Platonic speculation was a doctrine of dualism between spirit and matter, soul and body. Matter as such was evil, dark, negative, death; spirit as such was good, light, life. The soul then by its entrance into the body was imprisoned; it must struggle to be freed from the body to return to liberty. St. Paul recognized with the Platonist the fact of a dualism, a dispute between body and spirit; but he raised the whole Platonic doctrine to a higher plane, by placing the cause of that dualism in the will. It was not matter, not the body, as such, that was sinful. God had created man in his own image. He had called forth the sea and land, and fashioned all living things, and pronounced them good. It was the will of man that was wrong: illicit desires, evil passions, deceitful thoughts, selfish deeds. The body was only the instrument of this evil will.

Therefore while the Platonist had to wait for some physical force to overcome matter and destroy the body before his spirit could reach its goal, St. Paul fastened upon a principle which could redeem and purify the will of man, saving the whole man, soul and body, from the

warfare of sin in his members. Righteousness for the Platonist was only one of several means —mortifications, fasts, correct knowledge, etc.— of hastening the deliverance of the spirit from its prison-house, the body; but for St. Paul righteousness was the end in itself; it *was* salvation. The just man, the man in whom the Christ-principle had taken the place of ceremonies and the Law, was already redeemed, "risen with Christ," "sitting in heavenly places," and his body was no longer a minister of sin, but the temple of the Holy Ghost. Paul's dualism, in other words, was not physical or metaphysical, but moral. It was the dualism not of speculation, but of experience. It gave free play to the moral forces of the soul. It placed the responsibility for evil where it ever belongs: not in the fall of Adam or the nature of matter or the fact of the flesh, but in a bad will. It superseded Platonism, if only the philosophers and the Church fathers had been wise enough to see it.

The doctrine of the Græco-Roman world with which Paul had the greatest sympathy for its high moral tone was Stoicism. The Stoics believed that all things were ordered by a good and wise governor, divine reason. The majesty of man was their cardinal doctrine; the life of a sage differed in no wise from that of the gods, except in its mortality. "The world is, as it

were, a common city of gods and men." Hence all mankind are one body, members one of another, brothers. That St. Paul was called upon to define his position with reference to this noble system of philosophy there can be little doubt. We have, in fact, in the account of his sermon on Mars Hill in Athens a hint of the way in which St. Paul met the Stoic doctrines. And in the ancient and widespread tradition of a correspondence between Paul and Seneca, the famous Stoic moralist of the first century, we have perhaps the echo of St. Paul's work in Rome during the years of his captivity mentioned at the close of the Book of Acts. Rome was filled with Stoic philosophers in the reign of Nero. It is impossible that Paul should not have met and argued with them; nay, it is not at all impossible that he knew Seneca himself, as that philosopher committed suicide at Rome in the year 65.

The criticism which St. Paul passed upon Stoicism was that it offered a man no assurance of individual regeneration. It was not religious enough. It had no appreciation of the guilt of sin. Though the Stoic had in a sense the three graces which St. Paul preached,—faith, hope, and love,—they were untouched by the glow of religious confidence. The Stoics' faith was a cold intellectual assent to the government of divine

reason, whereas St. Paul's faith was the communion of child with father; their hope was for the new city of God "where justice should reign and the few sages should enjoy immortality; his hope was for all men, wise or foolish, who loved the Christ and looked for his coming; their love was for the genus man, doctrinal; his was for men, practical.

Therefore Paul's judgment of Stoicism came rather to fulfil than to destroy. Its splendid moral dignity he admired and approved; but its insufficiency as a religion he deplored. He had found the religious philosophy of Platonism false and artificial because it was not founded on the moral sense; he found the moral philosophy of Stoicism unfinished and insufficient because it was not crowned by religious faith. To the former he said, "If ye died with Christ to the world, why . . . do ye subject yourselves to ordinances after the precepts and doctrines of men?" and to the latter, "The just shall live by faith."

It was not, however, in recommending his Gospel to the Græco-Roman world that St. Paul found his powers of argument most put to the test. If the Cross was "foolishness to the Greeks," that was the worst that could be said. They had no prejudices against that Cross, if its preacher could make out a case for it. The

Gospel of Jesus stood the same chance of success as the manifold other religions which were to be poured for two centuries from the East upon the West. The attitude of the "Gentiles" to Paul's preaching was one of curiosity rather than hostility.

But with the Jews it was far different. To them the Cross was more than mere foolishness, it was a "stumbling-block." They had their idea of what the Messiah was to be. This poor, deluded Nazarene who had come to a death by crucifixion was far from the realization of that idea. They were jealous of their religion and their Law to an extent never paralleled by any sect or confession in the world. They had even wrung from the Roman Emperor considerable concessions for their faith; they were exempt from military service, their synagogue and Sabbaths were respected; they were excused from the strict police requirements of emperor-worship. For these Jews, Paul was a renegade and a traitor to the religion of his fathers, and his new Gospel, with its disregard of the Law, was the very destruction of all that was holy. We read in St. Paul's catalogue of his sufferings, that he was scourged to the extent of the law five times by the Jews, that he was three times beaten with rods, and once stoned.

According to the Book of Acts, Paul com-

mences his preaching in every new city by appealing first to the Jews in the synagogue, and being rejected by them for his doctrine of the Messiahship of Jesus, he turns then to the Gentiles. But the author of the Book of Acts is so clearly guilty of composing a narrative to show how Paul is under the direction of the Jewish Christian authorities at Jerusalem, that we cannot place much confidence in these repeated recitals of the appeal to the synagogue. From Paul's own account in Galatians, which is of course infinitely more reliable than the narrative of Acts, we see plainly that his interest was far more in the conversion of the non-Jewish population of the countries which he visited: "I laid before them [*i.e.* the elders at Jerusalem] the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, . . . and when they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel of the uncircumcision even as Peter with that of the circumcision . . . they gave Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship that we should go unto the gentiles." Moreover, all of Paul's Epistles, with the possible exception of Romans, bear unmistakable evidence of being written for Gentile readers. We must conclude, then, that Paul's contact with the Jews in his missionary labours was rather accidental and occasional.

With those Jews, however, who had accepted

Christ as Messiah, and so became members of the new sect of brethren, but without surrendering the Jewish ceremonies, it was far different. They were Paul's chiefest and most implacable enemies; "false brethren" he calls them, "grievous wolves that enter the fold." We have to remember that Christianity came into the world as a Jewish sect. Jesus, while maintaining for himself a position of quiet superiority to the Law, did not, nevertheless, formally abrogate the Law. He said that he came to fulfil, not to destroy. His disciples celebrated the feasts of Moses as he had done, went up at the appointed seasons to worship in the temple, brought their tithes as usual, kept the Sabbath, etc. They differed from their fellow-Jews only in that they recognized Jesus as the Messiah, and sought to prove their faith by his resurrection. They had no idea of sacrificing the prerogatives of Israel; nay, that the Messiah had come, only made Israel doubly sacred. Salvation was still and always of the Jews and of the Jews alone. The attitude of these early Jewish Christians to the Gentiles, therefore, was that they must either be circumcised and adopted into the full communion of the servants of the Law, or else, at least, must comply with the minimum of the Law (the so-called Noachian Commandments) which had long been current as the require-

ment for "proselytes of the Gate" or "God-fearing heathen." That a born Jew could neglect circumcision or the performance of the Law, was an outrageous proposition in their eyes.

When, therefore, St. Paul, with a confidence born of his innermost experience, boldly declared that with faith in Jesus the Jewish Law was null and void, that for the man who had been buried in baptism unto Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counted for aught, but only a new creation, he brought down upon himself the indignant wrath of the pillars of the Church at Jerusalem. If the kingdom of Abraham was opened without more ado to the nations of the earth, what then was the advantage of the children of Abraham? If the Law was useless, why then these generations of faithful Jews who had endured hatred, shame, and oppression to keep the Law? Was Moses deluded? Was the temple a house of idols? Were their feasts mere heathen rites?

It was a tremendous problem that faced St. Paul, one of the most tremendous that have ever faced a religious reformer. He had in his own soul but one answer: I have tried the Law and found it a minister of death only; I have looked on Christ and found him a minister of life. But to win, if he might, even one of his opponents, Paul turns his answer a thousand ways.

Now he draws his argument from history, showing how the promise to Abraham was before the Law, and insisting that since the promise is fulfilled in Christ, there is nothing now to wait for from the Law. Now he uses the subtle logic of the allegorist, finding the types of the old covenant of Law and the new covenant of grace in the figures of the patriarchal time. Now he urges the ethics of the freedom of the Christ-principle as over against the enforced and perfunctory righteousness of the Law. Now he turns to exhortation, and pleads with his readers to make earnest with the Gospel, and embrace their full opportunity of regeneration in Christ. He answers their objections with enthusiasm, in patience and in love. The children of Abraham had in nowise lost their prerogative, for by them came the promise of a Messiah for the nations, which was now fulfilled. The Law was by no means useless, for by it the children of Abraham were kept faithful, through the revelation of the destructiveness of sin, until in the fulness of time the promise of a deliverer from sin *and the Law* was fulfilled. Moses, the temple, the feasts, all were of "much advantage every way," for they were the pattern of the new Israel of the spirit. It is not to receive less that the old Israel of the flesh is called upon to give up the Law, but it is to come to its own in

the promise made hundreds of years before the Law was written. The Law was only a help, only a stage in Israel's development, "a schoolmaster to lead them to the Messiah." Does a son lose his prerogative when he escapes from the tutelage of his pedagogue and enters the freedom of his long-promised sonship?

The more St. Paul argued and pleaded, the more did his opponents work against him. They sought to bring discredit on his character, they ridiculed his person, they entered the churches he had founded and stirred up strife, especially in Asia Minor, as we see from the Galatian letter. In fact, it is quite probable that they succeeded in frustrating almost entirely the work of the apostle in one city where he had laboured three full years with diligence — in Ephesus. The Church of Ephesus disappears from history until the close of the first century, and then it appears in connection with a Johannine and not a Pauline tradition: as if the disciples of John found the remnants of Paul's work in Ephesus and reorganized the Church.

So this man of conflict laboured in the face of persecution and perils against ridicule from the Greek and enmity from the Jews, misunderstood by friends and foes alike, despite his pains of logic, possessed by one grand idea which was his inspiration, joy, and life, — the idea of free-

dom from the bondage of sin in the adoption by faith of the Christ-righteousness. He, more than any other of the disciples of the first century, understood the spirit that was in Christ — the spirit of sonship with God. Before a single Gospel was written, the ministry of Jesus was exemplified by this man in flesh and blood; and the prophecy of the majestic founder of Christianity, that they should come from the north and the east and the south and the west, and sit down in the Kingdom of God, was fulfilled. St. Paul established the Christian Church. He mediated the Gospel to the nations. He saved the name of Jesus from being the shibboleth of a Jewish sect. He gave it to mankind.

III

In all this study of the work of St. Paul in recommending the Christ-principle to the Græco-Roman world and the Jewish Church, we have only incidentally touched upon the qualities of the man, his character, disposition, and natural gifts. It would be interesting to follow him step by step in his long voyages through the Ægean and the Mediterranean, over his incessant journeys in Syria, Asia, Greece, Macedon, Palestine, and Italy, to mark his successes and his discouragements; to study

the play of his mind in the various new situations he met in Philippi, Corinth, Ephesus, Athens, Rome. For his work was a novel work; he had no pioneer before him to show the way. It would be interesting to stand by this man of conflict as he preaches before the incredulous Greeks on Mars Hill or the infuriated populace of Ephesus. It would be interesting to sit by him in the evening after his day's work, or at noontime when he is bending over his tent-leather, and hear him dictate his wonderful Epistles to the churches he has founded and left to thrive in his absence, praying that they may hold to the liberty with which Christ has made them free. We should find in him first of all a man with the prophet's conviction, "The cause of God must triumph, and I am its instrument." To us uncommissioned, uninspired citizens of an age in which the enthusiasm for gain seems to be the only respectable enthusiasm, this confidence of the prophets in their spiritual message too often appears as mere fanaticism. We are perhaps tempted to interrupt the impassioned preacher, as Porcius Festus did, saying, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning hath made thee mad." The burden of a cause, a cause to be won at any price, rests upon very few of us; and the cry, "Woe is me if I preach not the

gospel" . . . or, "Woe to him that preacheth another gospel," sounds strange in our ears. The man of conflict (and St. Paul was before all else a man of conflict) acquires a reputation for disorderly and seditious moral conduct with a community whose religious advance, or religious drift, is along the line of least resistance. Therefore St. Paul has found many a critic in our day as in his own, who will see nothing but the deluded fanatic in him, clinging to the thesis which he has embraced as the truth. But this is a foolish, unscholarly, and uncharitable judgment. St. Paul was not a fanatic. He was singularly free from the fault that lies nearest the prophet — the fault of ungoverned utterances. He was always concerned by argument, entreaty, example, discussion, to justify his ground and to commend his position. His zeal was tempered by a superb gift of reasoning, which he employed in a manner never since equalled in the field of religion. Even to-day not one theologian in twenty understands St. Paul's line of argument for the superiority of the new covenant of grace to the old covenant of Law. Again St. Paul's doctrine of freedom from the Law was accompanied by the loftiest theory of ethics. All attempts to use his teaching to countenance unlawfulness of deed or thought were met by the promptest rebuke

on his part. The freedom of Christ meant the freedom to grow in grace unhampered by the terrors of the Law, and not the liberty of doing evil unhindered by the qualms of conscience. The unclean man and the sluggard were not to be tolerated in the community. There was a debt upon the professors of the new religion to live so that their lives should be the greatest argument for the truth of the new religion. They were to "avoid all appearance of evil." "Ye are our Epistles," cries St. Paul to his church in Corinth, "written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of the heart."

Moreover there was in St. Paul, with all his absoluteness of character and uncompromising conviction, a vein of human sympathy deep as the bottommost springs of his being. He was a man of conflict, ready to face scourgings, shipwreck, the beasts of the arena, and the sword of Nero to establish his Gospel; and yet he never forgot the power which broke his rebellion and won his soul on the road to Damascus — the power of enduring love. His letters, especially those to his early Macedonian churches of Thessalonica and Philippi, breathe a beautiful spirit of sincere affection and fatherly solicitude. "Ye are our crown and glory . . . we live if ye stand

fast in the Lord. . . . I thank God upon all remembrance of you . . . I have you in my heart . . . Wherefore, my brethren, beloved and longed for, my joy and my crown, stand fast in the Lord." To the Galatians he writes, "My children, I am in travail again for you that Christ may be formed in you;" to the Romans, whom he has never seen, he writes that he "unceasingly makes mention of them in his prayers," longing to see them that he may bring them some spiritual gift. The Law had yielded to freedom in his soul through the power of love, the unlimited love of God; and so Paul declared that the whole Law was contained in that one word, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." In the strength of God's love he had done all the hard work of his life; it had been to him the ground of his faith and the food of his hope. Without it he knew that his speech, even though it were the speech of angels, would have been hollow as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal; and his sacrifice, even to the burning of his body, profitless. In the power of this love he had borne all things, believed all things, hoped all things, endured all things; and it had never failed him. His tribute to its priceless value is that magnificent ode in the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians, one of the world's masterpieces of the literature of the heart.

So we see reflected in the writings of St. Paul a man of many-sided talent, rich experience, and noble nature. He was a zealot and yet with "sweet reasonableness"; he was a logician and yet with great tenderness; he was a mystic and yet intensely practical; he was a dogmatist and yet with infinite sympathy. It is difficult, in short, to name a trait of St. Paul's large nature that is not immediately balanced by its opposite, so as to prevent that nature from growing into hardness or fanaticism. And for all that the traits did not neutralize each other to produce weakness and indecision in the man. He bore the supreme test nature can put upon a man to try him whether he be great or weak — the test of maintaining one purpose in many disturbances, distractions, and discouragements of life.

IV

A man's value to posterity does not consist in the number of doctrines that he leads men to believe. The philosophy and theology of St. Paul are those which his peculiar mission, the freeing of the Gospel of Jesus from Jewish particularism, imposed upon him. We no longer move in a sphere limited by the religious concepts of the first century. Therefore much of St. Paul is of no vital interest to us: his long,

laborious argument in Romans for the prerogative of the children of Abraham, despite the forfeiture of the Law, literature which Coleridge pronounced to be "the profoundest in existence," passes by us with scarce any other effect than to awaken our admiration. His psychology seems crude in the light of the researches of the nineteenth century, and his philosophy of history, circumscribed and vain. For all that, the man behind the philosopher and the theologian was marvellously great.

I have called St. Paul "the apostle of a universal religion" in the title of this essay, meaning by these words not to prophesy the universal extension of Christianity, but to do justice to St. Paul's own idea of his mission. He conceived his new principle of Christ-righteousness as absolutely superseding every form of worship or religion in existence. They do him grievous wrong who see in his theology only the rehabilitation of Judaism, or who say with M. Renan, "The fall of Adam is the basis of the theology of Paul." Paul used Adam, to be sure, as the symbol of man in his unspiritual state, "of the earth earthy," just as Christ, on the other hand, was the symbol and type of man in his spiritual state — "the second Adam," "the man from heaven." But it was not the tragedy of the garden of Eden in Jewish mythology that was

the basis of St. Paul's system; it was the actual state of mankind as he found it in his own experience, in Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome, law or no law; the same failure in both Jew and Gentile to fulfil the full measure of the stature of manhood as Jesus fulfilled it. In seeking, finding, and preaching thus a religion applicable, without distinction of ceremonies, to all the Roman world, St. Paul was truly the apostle of a universal religion. And had the men, even the greatest of them who followed him in the preaching of the religion of Jesus, comprehended St. Paul's lofty idea of the union of all races and all conditions of men in a purely spiritual religion, Christianity would not have presented to the world the sad spectacle of sectarian persecution, worldly ambition, and dogmatic obscurantism with which too many of the pages of the history of the Church are filled.

We are no longer moved by the allegory of the sons of the free woman and the bond woman; the argument of the seed sown in the earth has little weight with us as a biological proof of the resurrection; we no longer look hourly for the coming of the Messiah in the clouds. These things which were real to St. Paul, as his own flesh and blood were real to him, have gone into historical decay and dissolution. They were the mortal part of his thought, the perishable in his teaching.

But the warfare between evil and good in our hearts, the temptation to offer substitutes of sacrifice for righteousness of soul, the despair of facing our own life of accumulative transgression with faith in the future, the subtle danger of growing hard and self-centred as the unloveliness of men and women seems to grow upon our observation — all this is ever with us, making every hour of our lives tragically earnest and prophetic. It is with these great concerns of character that our life is made religious. It is these tremendous problems of experience that open our spiritual eyes to the glory of the world's religious heroes, and make those heroes our brothers of to-day. St. Paul lived out our problems, gloriously, triumphantly. He fought the battle with evil in his members; he conquered the temptation to offer sacrifices for his soul; he triumphed over the despair of remembered shortcomings; he shunned the danger of selfish misanthropy. In nearly two thousand years the world has made much of St. Paul's theology obsolete; but love is still the queen of virtues, and still the fruits of the spirit are beautiful as on the day when the wonderful apostle wrote them down for his warring churches in Galatia, —"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; for against these there is no law."

CHAPTER VI

MARCUS AURELIUS, THE PHILOSOPHER OF A DYING WORLD

"Not in the clamor of the crowded street,
Not in the shouts and plaudits of the throng,
But in ourselves are triumph and defeat."
—LONGFELLOW.

"IMPERIAL ROME" is a majestic phrase. Its liquid consonants and deep vowels fill the mouth, and bring suggestions of splendid marbles and armed hosts, of the sounding Forum, of feasts and garlands, of strange divinities, and far-lying provinces. Suggestions only; for history is a jealous editor; more like a Fate than a Muse, she holds the shears of Oblivion, and cuts out mercilessly from her record of the past all that does not serve her immediate purpose in the evolution of states and ideas. Imperial Rome at last fell by injustice, robbery, and violence; so she goes down to history as Rome the Monstrous. She withstood, in the name of her ancestral religion, the innovation of Christianity, and persecuted the saints of God. Christianity triumphed, and Imperial

Rome has come down through history as Rome the Heathen. The case at the bar of the avenging Nemesis of History is merciless and awfully concise: "Art thou, Imperial Rome, guilty of degeneration, of persecution, of impiety, brutality, and tyranny?"—"I am guilty."—"Then be thy faults remembered and thy virtues forgotten; for what thou hast destroyed by war, slavery, and superstition is more than what thou hast built up through thy conquests and thy laws. The case is dismissed."

Not so if we stand at about the year 150 of our era and reconstruct the fortunes of the Imperial City, mistress of the world. A prince was reigning then (Antoninus Pius) whose virtues of character and counsel are celebrated in history as preëminent in a line of worthy rulers of Rome whose exploits filled the first half of the second century of our era. Under his predecessors, Trajan and Hadrian, the extent of the empire had reached its limit: Scotland on the north and Sahara on the south; to the east the Parthian kingdom, and to the west the Atlantic Ocean. In other words, the entire civilized world, and almost the entire known world,—Europe, Asia, and Africa,—were in the power of Rome. Her wealth was limitless, and all that wealth could buy was in her markets; the fabulous merchandise of the far east, the hoarded

treasures of old kingdoms fallen beneath the arms of the mistress city on the Tiber. Rome was secure, splendid, impregnable, in the year 150. The hordes of barbarian Goths and Huns and Germans had not yet pressed over the borders to threaten first the provinces and finally the capital itself. For more than five centuries no enemy had set foot within the sacred precincts of the city, and only one, the dreaded Hannibal, had been within near cry to its walls.

Within, Rome was all life, action, enterprise. The proud consciousness of growing from century to century the more absolute arbiter of the fashion, the ethics, the politics, the religion of the world, had made of Rome not only the capital of the world but its centre too. Every school of philosophy, every sect of religion, every style of instruction, every mode and every foible of the vast empire, made its way to Rome. To be heard at Rome was to be introduced to the world; to win Rome was to win the world.

Although the monsters and imbeciles who had worn the purple during the fourscore years which intervened between the accession of Tiberius and the death of Domitian, the Caligulas and Neros and Vitelliuses, had done their best to ruin Rome, the magnificent work of Cæsar and Augustus Octavian had withstood that shock of tyranny, debauch, and folly; and it was still a strong

Rome, valiant in arms, rich in provinces, rolling in wealth, undiminished in prestige among the nations, which received the wonderful emperors Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines — on the whole the most perfect succession of rulers the world has ever seen. Imperial Rome in all her glory was the Rome of Trajan, Hadrian, and Antoninus, the Rome of the years 100–160.

I

In the fourth year of the Emperor Hadrian, in 121 A.D., Marcus Verus, to be known later as Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, was born. He came of a family of senatorial rank. Though his father had died before reaching any office higher than the prætorship (a sort of judgeship), his grandfather had been thrice consul. The young Marcus from earliest childhood evinced a disposition of deep religiosity and a character of rare purity and evenness of temper. At the age of eight he was a Salian priest; his earliest statues represent him as an incense-bearer. Tradition says, too, that he soon learned all the ritual hymns of his office by heart; and certain it is that in later years when he returned in triumph to celebrate his victories over the barbarians, Rome saw the unprecedented spectacle of an emperor chanting the pontifical invocations without need of prompting by the *ceremoniarius*.

So deeply intimate was the sacramental to the soul of this philosopher-priest-emperor.

The training of the boy Marcus was the finest the world could offer. The most renowned philosophers and pedagogues, M. Cornelius Fronto the Stoic at their head, were the preceptors and companions of his early years. Especially under the influence of Fronto, Marcus gave himself soul and body to the severe discipline of the Stoics, adopting at the tender age of eleven their rough woollen cloak and plank bed strewn with skins.

He pleased the Emperor Hadrian greatly by his aptness of intellect and his seriousness of demeanour; so greatly, indeed, that when Ælius Cæsar, the designated successor of Hadrian, died in the year 138, the emperor chose Antoninus to succeed him, but on condition that Antoninus should at the same time designate the young Marcus Verus as his successor. Hadrian died the same year (138), and his remains were interred in the majestic tomb of his own building, which still stands grim and huge and round by the bank of the yellow Tiber — the Mole of Hadrian.

Though Marcus Verus was but seventeen years old when he became *Imperator designatus* of the Roman Empire, he was immediately associated with Antonius in the consulship; and throughout

the long reign of that most excellent of emperors, from 138 to 161, Marcus Aurelius (for so he had begun to call himself) had such training by precept, by example, by the actual responsibilities of high office, for the supreme post of emperor of Rome as his own matchless conduct in that exalted dignity scarcely more than justified. His devotion to Antoninus, his uncle and his adoptive father, was untiring; his admiration for him unbounded. Years afterward, when Marcus Aurelius wrote his "Thoughts" by the lonely camp-fires on the Danube, he recalled Antoninus "his father" as the man to whom he owed more than to all other human beings: only the gods are to thank beyond him. "Everything as befits a disciple of Antoninus" was his motto. During the twenty-three years of Antoninus Pius's reign, Marcus slept but two nights outside the emperor's palace; and when the emperor was about to close his eyes in death, he ordered his attendants to bear the golden statue of Fortune through the oft-travelled hallway to Marcus's apartments to indicate that he was alone to receive the purple which the saintly Antoninus was laying off.

Marcus Aurelius was in his fortieth year when he became emperor of Rome, divine Augustus. From boyhood in the golden days when Hadrian had marked his winning face and playfully

called him "not Verus but Verissimus," Marcus Aurelius's steps had been guided toward the throne, not by the horrid paths of war, but through the lovely ways of philosophy, reflection, and religion.

In his person the extravagant vision of Plato was fulfilled, if only for a score of years, in all Rome's hundreds; the philosopher was on the throne; the immense state, the civilized world, was ruled by a man for whom the dignities and emoluments of office meant nothing and its responsibilities meant everything — one by whom "fortune's buffets and rewards were taken with equal thanks." The gods who give one man the plough to hold, another the sword, another the sacraments, had placed in his hands the sceptre of empire. His part to play on the stage of life was under the same benign management and conditioned by the same absolute obedience as that of the meanest slave in all his provinces. 'Tis only accidental circumstance that separates Alexander from his groom. Real distinction is distinction of character. "As one's thoughts habitually turn, so will one's character result, for the soul is dyed by its thoughts. Dye thou then thy soul with such thoughts as this, that it is possible to live a good life wherever one's lot be cast; yes, if one live at court, it is even there possible to live good."

Such was the doctrine, in his own vivid imagery, of this philosopher-prince. And it is the single-voiced testimony of history that never a nobler doctrine based on the old philosophies was more nobly lived. Marcus Aurelius bore himself so blameless in his great office that not a breath of slander or invidious rumour has clung to his name. It is still a name to conjure with, a synonym, even in the minds of those who have never read a word of his writings and know no more of his life than that he was crowned emperor of Rome, for the highest flights of virtue, loveliness, and honour reached in all the annals of ancient history.

We are not concerned with the political history of the Roman Empire under Marcus Aurelius. The merest outline of the events of his nineteen years' rule will suffice to give us a background for the study of his character and philosophy.

The long peace of the empire, the *pax Romana,* which had continued virtually undisturbed since the days when Varus lost his legions and the silver eagle in the Teutoburger forest, was rudely shaken in Aurelius's reign.

First the rude Parthians revolted, whose desert land had already been a burying-ground for a Roman army in the latter years of the republic. Lucius Verus, the emperor's adopted brother

and colleague in the Cæsarship, led the army against them. His arms were crowned with triumph in the year 165. Far more serious was the movement which began about a year later among the German tribes, the Quadi, Marcomanni, Sarmatæ, on the banks of the Danube, and which continued throughout the fourteen remaining years of Aurelius's reign — the first act of the great tragedy of Rome's fall, the fair-haired peril from the North. Marcus Aurelius, the peace-loving philosopher, left the capital, which was plague-stricken with the pest which Lucius's soldiers had brought home from the east, and, with his dissolute and frivolous colleague, took up the burden of the German war. Verus died on the return from the campaign of 169, and the double emperorship of eight years was at an end.

During a lull in the German wars, about the year 175, Avidius Cassius, commander of the legions in the East, revolted and proclaimed himself emperor. Marcus set out for the scene of the revolt, but before he had reached Syria Avidius had been killed. The emperor magnanimously burned the correspondence of the traitor, to signify that he extended full amnesty to all Avidius's accomplices, and is even said to have expressed regret that the murder of Avidius had prevented him from pardoning the offender.

In the same year (175), Faustina, the emperor's consort, died. His children, too, one by one, were snatched from him by the gods, whose most faithful worshipper he was, until of his five sons only one remained — the unspeakably degenerate Commodus, whose cruelty, debauchery, and crime filled Rome from one end to the other. That such a father could have such a son was beyond the power of men to believe, and the name of Commodus was associated with that of a gladiator of the time, who was one of the partners of Faustina in the dissolute life she led beyond the stupid walls of her philosopher husband's palace.

The emperor arrived in the East too late to be of need in quelling the revolt of Cassius. He made the visit, however, an opportunity for seeing something of his provinces in the east — Egypt, Syria, and Achaia. At Athens he was initiated into the old religious mysteries of Eleusis.

He returned to Rome in the year 176, and was almost immediately called away again to the north to meet the persistent and ominous enemy on the Danube. It was a gloomy, thankless task for the emperor, broken with illness and grief, longing for the studious quiet of undisturbed days by his own hearth. The Romans assembled before his palace and begged him to

stay and let a subordinate fight these battles in the wilderness; his friends refused to give up the comforts of the capital to comfort him in his tent on the borders; Galen, his great physician, would not go with him, much less the company of panegyrists and chroniclers that swarmed to form the camp-following of Roman generals in popular campaigns. Nevertheless, duty, which spoke more loudly in Marcus Aurelius's ear than either the flattery of friends or the threats of enemies, told him that his place, as father of his country, was at the post of his country's danger. He took with him his son Commodus, whom he had just before associated with himself in the Cæsarship, and at the head of about a hundred thousand men set out for the inhospitable shores of the Danube.

It was his last campaign. The fever attacked him at Vienna, or at Sirmium, on the 10th of March, 180. His body, wasted by fastings, grief, toil, vigils, and disease, offered but little resistance to the last of foes. A few days of struggle, and the emperor acquiesced calmly, almost happily, in the approach of death. He took tender and dignified leave of his generals, spoke some words of counsel to his son in private, and quietly folded his cloak over his head. They took him to Rome and buried him in the magnificent tomb of Hadrian, and the people

mourned him not as a great prince, but everybody crying: "Marcus, my father!" "Marcus, my son!" "Marcus, my brother!"

The apotheosis (or deification) of Marcus Aurelius was spontaneous, instantaneous. Before his funeral was finished he was acclaimed as god, "He whom the gods lent us has rejoined the gods." Every household of Rome was enjoined to have an image of the departed emperor for worship. After Marcus Aurelius, the Antonines became a sacred cult, and the "Numen Antoninum" took its place beside the divinities of Cæsar and Augustus in the Roman Pantheon.

So far, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, emperor of the Roman world: a general faithful to the call of the hour, ten times acclaimed as imperator and conqueror, though at heart a man of peace whom war sickened; a statesman untiring in his concern for the welfare of his people, selling the royal furniture from his palace on the Palatine in public auction in the Forum, to provide for an emergency in the public treasury, increasing the power of the municipalities, caring for the public charities instituted by Trajan, providing for widows and children, restraining the people's cruel lust for blood in the gladiatorial games, inviting the advice of all his subjects, not from a sense of incapacity in himself, but from an appreciation of the value of counsel

with wise men, sitting always in his assigned place in the assembly of the senate, deliberating with the fathers until the presiding consul dismissed the august body with the formula: "We delay you no longer, Senators." He was not a brilliant statesman or a great creator, like Augustus; yet he dignified every duty, shamed weakness, and silenced discontent by the even conscientiousness of his rule. He was not a wonderful captain like Julius Cæsar, adding new worlds to the empire; yet in his toilsome winters on the Pannonian frontier he "stayed the barbarian till western civilization was Christian." With that word *Christian* we are already in the new Roman world of which Marcus Aurelius was not a part, and would not be a part. He was all of the old world, the world of the Cæsars who had a religion and who defended it — the old, old religion of Numa. He closed the old line, and Constantine, after a century of frightful anarchy and vain revival, opened the new. Marcus Aurelius was the last of his race.

II

But Marcus Aurelius was more than ruler of the Roman Empire; he has that greater title: ruler of his own spirit. He was a philosopher on the throne. And by that we do not mean simply a learned pedant, — a James Stuart or a

Charles the Fifth, — patching out his leisure hours with dabblings in metaphysics, theology, and ethics. He was a true philosopher in that he was through and through "philosophos" — a lover of wisdom, which is applied metaphysics, theology, and ethics. He sought a principle to govern his life, not a title to decorate it, nor a whim to amuse it. From youth to age his mind was bent on knowing and following the truth, irrespective of position, or fortune, or fame, or favour; "to look," in his own words, "to nothing else, no, not even in the least measure, than to reason and wisdom." "For what is able to conduct men? One thing, and only one — philosophy, the love of wisdom; for this keeps the divinity within a man free from insult and harm, and makes it lord over pleasures and pains, doing nothing with idleness, nothing with deceit, nothing with hypocrisy."

To this lofty creed Marcus Aurelius was sincerely constant. Philosophy was his guiding star, never outdazzled by the mundane splendour of his Roman palace, and never lost in the night of affliction and anxiety which settled on his spirit. "The god Hermes," says Julianus, "looking at Marcus, said, 'O Verus, what seems to thee to be the noblest end of life?' And he replied gently and wisely, 'To imitate the gods!'" And Marcus himself writes: "Live

with the gods; now he lives with the gods who constantly exhibits a soul content with their apportionment, and busy in doing what the spirit wills whom Zeus has given to every man for his guardian and guide, a portion of himself — understanding and reason."

In the lonely winter nights of the northern campaign, sitting in his tent with a torch for his lamp, Marcus Aurelius wrote down his thoughts on the gods and man, duty and destiny, as they came to him, without regard to beauty of style or art of arrangement. And these few hundreds of aphorisms and injunctions are preserved to us in the familiar volume entitled, "The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius," or in the expressive title of the original "Marcus Antoninus to Himself." "The Meditations" are, in the happy words of the latest of Marcus Aurelius's translators, "the photographic presentation of a soul." They do not cry aloud to be heard, they do not seek to please by clever phrase. They only stand there as they were thought by a dignified, dutiful, devout soul. The sense of mission which Socrates and Epictetus, Jeremiah and Jesus felt, is not in them; much less is there any sign of that hankering after *éclat* and novelty which marks the moral treatise of the coarser grain or the proclamation of a "militant altruism." The author wrote for one auditor

alone, — "Marcus to himself." There is not even that covert expectation of eventual publicity which lurks in the usual *journal intime* or *Confessions*. It was not until the year 1558 that the first edition of the "Meditations" was published by Xylander of Zurich, although the old grammarian Suidas had mentioned long before a work of Aurelius in twelve books on the "Conduct of our Life," undoubtedly the "Meditations." Suidas adds laconically, "It is easier to admire in silence than to praise, for words cannot express his merits." In 1675 the Cardinal Barbarini, nephew of Pope Urban VIII, republished the "Meditations," dedicating the work to his soul "to make it redder than purple at the sight of the virtues of this Gentile."

It was again a dignitary of the Roman Church, or at least one who later became cardinal, Angelo Mai, who in 1814 discovered, under the superimposed writing of some ecclesiastical chronicles, the correspondence which passed between Marcus Aurelius and his chief preceptor, the Stoic rhetorician Marcus Cornelius Fronto.

The tributes of scholars and philosophers to the man Marcus Aurelius and to his book, from old Suidas just quoted to the present day, have been unanimously enthusiastic. Niebuhr, the great German historian, says, "It is more delightful to speak of Marcus Aurelius than of

any other man in history." Mr. Lecky, the distinguished historian of European morals, calls him "perhaps as nearly a perfectly virtuous man as has ever appeared upon our earth;" and Matthew Arnold says, "The most beautiful figure in history . . . one of those consoling and hope-inspiring marks which stand out forever to remind our weak and easily discouraged race how high human goodness and perseverance have once been carried and may be carried again." And for the "Meditations" Renan's happy phrase has become classic and final: "The most purely human book that there is."

III

It is now time to turn to that wonderful book which Antoninus wrote "to himself," and learn from it what his soul was like; from what sources he drew the inward strength which kept him calm in the turmoil of war, faithful in the faithless generation of debauchees, sweet in the strife of the embittered, the disenchanted, the jealous, the unjust. We cannot analyze the book, or give a *résumé* of its contents, for it has no plan or progression in its structure — no structure at all, in fact. It is simply a succession of thoughts strung, like precious beads, on the thread of time, a diamond sometimes between amethysts, a pearl between jaspers, here

and there a broken brilliant. It is not the chain that is beautiful — only the gems. Each paragraph of the "Meditations" is like an entry jotted down in a diary, the thought of the moment on the deep concerns of life, which this pale-visaged, calm-voiced emperor-sage always bore about with him. It is hard to find one thought or entry which could serve as text for the whole book. But if compelled to do so, I should choose the tenth thought of the fifth book, which reads in part: "In all this darkness and dirt, and this stream of being, time, and change, I see nothing to be greatly honoured, nothing to be wholly sought. But with courage one must wait one's deliverance from the flesh, and not in vexation at the delay, but resting in these truths alone: 1st, Nothing can happen to me that is not in accord with the nature of the All; and 2d, I have power not to do anything against my divine monitor, my conscience. For that nobody can force me to transgress." These twin comforting truths contain the gist of Marcus Aurelius's philosophy: the first his metaphysical creed — all is according to nature; the second his moral creed — man is master of his fate. Let us examine these two sayings more closely. First, "Whatever happens is in accord with the All."

In this and many like expressions the em-

peror confesses his adherence to the calm, majestic doctrine of the Stoic philosophy, whose watchword was "nature." It is impossible, perhaps unnecessary, for us to dwell at length in this essay on that great system of philosophy, called Stoic, from the "Stoa" or porch in Athens where its first professors taught — a system which for about six hundred years (three hundred each side of the dividing date of the Christian era) claimed the allegiance of many of the deepest, noblest, purest natures of the Greek and Roman world: Zeno, Cleanthes, Chrysippus, Cato, Seneca, and Epictetus. The principal features of the Stoic philosophy were its identification of the moving power of nature, or reason, with will, thus making the natural order a moral order; further, the consequent obligation of all men to live "according to nature," which means according to the highest moral order; and finally, the inclusion of all men in the ideal city of Zeus by virtue of a common nature, not a few by right of a special prerogative. This last was preëminently a feature of Roman Stoicism of the Empire. It could not live except on soil prepared by the extension of political rights beyond the ancient city limits and the classes traditionally favoured by birth or property. If we had time to trace these component features of Stoicism to their sources, we should find our-

selves covering most of the ground of Greek philosophy, so varied and comprehensive were the interest and powers of the early Stoics. Their unalterable Cosmic Will, the soul of the universe, is from the enigmatic Heraclitus; their identification of reason with the will is from the Cynics through Antisthenes, who narrowed Socrates's idea of reason to cover only the will effectuating itself in action; whereas Plato widened it to cover all possible knowledge, and even intuition. Socratic philosophy with Plato, consequently, became a complete metaphysics; with Antisthenes and the Cynics it became exclusively ethics. Will alone is of importance in man, was the doctrine they passed on to the Stoic philosophers. Pleasure, desire, grief, fear, the things which we know as most real, were for them only vain imaginings of good and evil; pleasure, for example, imagined good in the present; desire, imagined good in the future; grief, imagined evil in the present; and fear imagined evil in the future. We should likewise find that even the "anti-social bravado" of such Cynics as the crotchety Diogenes in his tub contributed, by their very abuse of the prerogatives of free-will and individuality, to that humaner social ideal of brotherhood which gradually, under the combined influence of Stoicism and Christianity, replaced

the heartless caste system of the ancient world.

Marcus Aurelius then, in avowing himself a disciple of the Stoic philosophy, allied himself with the noblest doctrine of thought and life the Græco-Roman world had brought forth — a doctrine which, through its insistence on the unity of the cosmos and the potential divinity of man, has throughout all ages exercised a most potent influence on the history of Christian theology. From Origen to Schleiermacher thinkers have been possessed and filled by the sublime conviction of the Stoic: —

> "All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body nature is, and God the soul."

After this short digression on the nature of the Stoic philosophy, let us return to its exemplification in the person of the Emperor Aurelius. "Nothing can happen to me that is not in the nature of the all." And again he says, "The world of nature is one out of all its parts, and God is one through all, and substance is one, and law is one, and reason is the common boon of all thinking life, and truth is one," and again: "Everything harmonizes with me that is well pleasing to thee, O nature; nothing is early for me, nothing late, that is in good time with thee. All that thy seasons bring, O nature, I

account as my fruit; from thee, in thee, to thee, are all things."

With this confidence in great nature to take care of her own, Marcus Aurelius is lifted above the petty distractions and offences that flesh is heir to. "The whips and scorns of time, the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely," he can bear, not because of the "dread of something after death," but because he must live in accord with sovereign and beneficent nature. "The soul of the universe is kind," he says, "and merciful; and the mind that follows this soul never has cause of evil-doing in it. For it has no evil in it . . . and is not harmed by evil."

All distraction of the soul, then, is vain imagining for Marcus Aurelius: "Do away with vain imaginings, and it will be for thee as for the mariner who has rounded the stormy cape — peace, and a still sea, without a wave. So Marcus Aurelius wrote his "Crossing the Bar" seventeen hundred years before Lord Tennyson.

The elements of strength and beauty in this creed of confidence in great nature are many and evident. There is, first of all, a dignity aroused by this call to live after nature, which is akin to the calm majesty of the gods. For Marcus, as for Browning, —

> "Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
> From outward things, whate'er you may believe:
> There is an inmost centre in us all
> Where truth abides in fulness."

"Look within," says the Roman; "within is a spring of virtue, and it will continually well up if thou dost always dig." And again, "Life is more like the wrestling match than like the dance." And still again, "Even if the whole were chaos, yet rejoice that in this chaos you have in yourself a reasonable and ruling soul."

Persuaded of the final and eternal fairness of nature, Marcus Aurelius asks no temporal favours and pleads for no exemption from temporal ills. The former are, for the sage, empty flattery; the latter only imagined evils: both pertain not to his free and sovereign spirit, but to his passions and desires. "One man prays," he says, and the words are touching in the mouth of the much afflicted father, "'How may I not lose my child?' but do thou pray, 'How may I not fear to lose my child?'"

He knows that he will mingle with the "busybody, the ungrateful, the arrogant, the deceitful, the envious" when he addresses his soul at the opening of each new day; but his plan of conduct is laid down with regard solely to ennobling his soul by every contact and associa-

tion. "One thing alone is worthy of much," he says, "to lead a life of truth, righteousness, and sweetness, in the midst of deceitful and unjust men." And toward the offender himself, Marcus Aurelius professes a doctrine as lofty as the doctrine of the Gospel of Jesus. "Remember," he says, "that kindness is invincible, if it be genuine. For what can the most insulting man do to thee if thou dost persist in being well disposed toward him; and if, as chance offers, thou dost kindly admonish him and teach him better things in the very time in which he is trying to injure thee, saying to him: 'Not so, my son; we are made for something better than that; it is yourself that you are injuring, not me, my son.' And so show him by tact and kindness how this is true, that not even the bees do as he does, nor any animals that are social by nature. And thus thou must admonish him, not with any sneer or reproach in thy soul, but with unfeigned affection; and not that bystanders may see thee and admire, but as if thou and he were alone, face to face, even if others be by."

For the man who is in perfect harmony with great nature, death, of course, can have no terrors. Although here and there Marcus Aurelius says something which might point to the purely agnostic position on the subject of

immortality, — for example, "Death, whether it be a dissolution, or a dispersion into atoms, or an emptying of soul, or a quenching, or a change of state"; and again, "He who fears death fears either the cessation of feeling or a change of feeling," — still by far the majority of the many passages of his "Thoughts" in which he speaks of death deny any continuance of consciousness in another state, any immortality. I will quote but a few: "Death is the end of perception and desire and instruction." "Near is thy oblivion of all things; near is all things' oblivion of thee." "In a little thou shalt be no longer anywhere, even as Hadrian and Augustus are not." "And constantly remember that the human is as smoke, and nothing." There is no struggle, no bitterness, no ineffectual protest against this inscrutable fate which awaits us all. The philosopher is the perfect Stoic. "Rail not at death, but greet it as one of those things which nature wills: as youth and old age, growth and maturity, teeth, beard, and gray hairs . . . and all the rest that the seasons of thy life bring, so is life's dissolution."

Unmistakably grand as this philosophy of Stoicism is, however, in dignity, benevolence, and intrepidity of soul, it cannot claim our unqualified praise and assent. There is a strain

missing in the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius which we can scarcely spare, and a tendency present which may lead to great evil. By the former I mean the strain of sympathy, of compassion with our brother men; and by the latter the temptation to fatalism, at least to moral complacency and indifference, by throwing the burden of things on some abstract "Nature," "The All," "Cosmos," or what you will, instead of holding man to strict moral responsibility for his own thoughts and deeds. Marcus Aurelius himself shunned both these dangers of coldness and apathy, the Scylla and Charybdis of Stoic doctrine, because he was greater as a man than as a philosopher. But with another the doctrine of "whatever is, is right" (which he preaches in terms) might legitimately lead to a philosophy of moral indifference and a policy of moral *laissez-faire*. Such sentiments, for example, as the following, taken quite at random from the "Meditations": "To be vexed by anything that happens is apostasy from nature." "Whatever life the Fates' thread has spun for thee, fit thyself thereto." "Man, thou hast been a citizen of this great state: what matters it whether five years or three? What matters it then if thou art now dismissed, not by a tyrant nor an unjust judge, but by that nature which brought thee here? — But I have finished only

three acts, not the five. — Hush! He who made the drama shall determine its end; depart then satisfied." Such sentiments as these are not conducive to training moral warriors. The man who, holding them, makes his life strong and beautiful, does so in spite of his doctrine of fatalism of character and annihilation of personality, not because of it. In other words, he is greater by far than his creed. Such a man was Marcus Aurelius, and therefore he is among the world's spiritual heroes.

The second clause of that short confession which we have made the text for the analysis of Marcus Aurelius's doctrine is, you remember, as follows, "I have power not to do anything contrary to my divine monitor conscience; for that nobody can force me to transgress." The duty of a man to help reform his brother, the sense of a mission, in other words, was never present to Aurelius's mind. "Another's sin must be left where it is," he says. But the responsibility of a man to make his own life blameless and beautiful was upon him with inspiring force. "Live as on the mountain." "Live with the gods." "Who is it that forbids thee to live out thy creed?" "He that sinneth, sinneth against himself." "What need of surmise when one may see." "Begin with thyself, and first examine thine own life." "The light of a candle

shines until it is quenched, and shall the truth and righteousness and wisdom in thee fail earlier?" "All judgment and impulse and desire and deviation are from within." "Know what nature asks and be distracted by nothing else." "Thou canst live above." "Short is life; one fruit there is of the earthy existence: a pious disposition and acts of common good." These fragments are but samples of the bracing, moral doctrine of man's present responsibility which pervades the "Meditations." Marcus Aurelius has no place for the luke-warm in virtue. "Either the support or the supported," is his curt dilemma. "Let us seek to please men, *but* let us do what the argument of righteousness impels us to, even against men's wills." Again, "Dost thou wish rather to become good to-morrow than to be good to-day?"

It is no consideration of utility or convention of society or figure of speech of philosophy — this moral fervour of Marcus Aurelius. He testifies out of his inmost experience. He, too, is one of the few seers who, like Moses and Plato and Jesus, have seen the perfect beauty and harmony of righteousness. His inspiration is greater than his logic. He lives by faith. "No longer breathe only the air that surrounds thee, but join the life of reason, too, that envelops all things; for the power of reason is not less dif-

fused for those who wish to share in it, than is the atmosphere for those who breathe." The absolute beauty of holiness apart from praise or blame, the glory of the good-in-itself, comes over him. "Is the emerald less lovely because it is not praised, or gold or ivory or the flower?" "The Pythagoreans bid us in the morning to look up, to be reminded that there all is in the same eternal harmony, and each part is doing its own work; to be reminded, too, of purity and naked simplicity; for there is no curtain over the stars."

"No curtain over the stars." Let our quotations from Marcus Aurelius end with that beautiful word which so finely characterizes his whole life of pure, benign, and unostentatious faithfulness in the dark, moral heavens of his time: —

> "[His] soul was like a star and dwelt apart;
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free.
> So [did he] travel on life's common way"

(nay, what is far harder, on an emperor's heralded way)

> "In cheerful godliness; and yet [his] heart
> The lowliest duties on herself did lay."

IV

I have called Marcus Aurelius "the Philosopher of a Dying World," and one will recognize in the words the influence of Renan, whose fine

volume on the Stoic Emperor is entitled, *Marc Aurel et la Fin du Monde antique.* He was set at the meeting-point of two worlds, — the old world of polytheism and the Roman State, and the new world of Christianity and the Roman Church, a time when the world was beginning to take note of the new religion of Jesus in many countries and in great numbers. "We are of yesterday," cries the African Christian Tertullian, a younger contemporary of Marcus Aurelius, "and yet we fill your camps, your courts, and your forums." Philosophers had already for fifty years been arguing for and against the Christian faith before the public: on the one side the defenders of the old polytheism or state religion of Rome, objecting that the Christians were a set of women, *parvenus*, and slaves, who had their doctrines from witches; on the other side the apologists for Christianity, who claimed that the purpose of creation and all human history was fulfilled in the advent of Jesus as the culmination of Jewish (and even Gentile) prophecy.

In this contest between polytheism and Christianity, Marcus Aurelius took no active part; it did not exist as a problem for him. He belonged entirely to the old order; he stands facing Augustus, not Constantine. There is no evidence that he ever read or even saw the Christian apologies which were addressed to

him by zealots eager to enlist the fair-minded emperor as arbiter between the contending faiths; and moreover there were most bitter persecutions of the Christians all through his reign, the one at Lyons and Vienne in 177 (described by a letter in the fifth book of Eusebius's "Ecclesiastical History") being perhaps the most awful persecution the Christians ever suffered, not excepting the massacres of Nero. The emperor himself, of course, was not the instigator of these horrors. With his perfect humanity he must have been disgusted and sickened by them as he was by the gladiatorial shows, which he watched with weary indifference. However, that the Christians were nothing for him but the sect of intractable fanatics, hungry for martyrdom, which Pliny had described to the Emperor Trajan sixty years before, we gather from the single passage in the "Meditations," where he speaks of them: Let the soul be ready to meet its fate, "not in pure stubbornness like the Christians, but with reasonableness and dignity and freedom from tragic ostentation."

The old order had to pass away because it had fulfilled its mission in completing the outward and material unity of the world. The inward and spiritual unity of the world it could not, even in its noblest flower of the Stoic philosophy, effect, because even Stoicism was founded on the

selfish, exclusive prerogative of the ancient state. The ideal of the Stoic philosophy is noble and fair-sounding, the perfect equality of all men, in the presence of universal reason; the duty of all men to live according to reason; the cultivation of the four cardinal virtues, — wisdom, or the knowledge of good and evil; justice, or the meting out to every man his due; fortitude, or the enduring of pain and labour; and temperance, or moderation in all things. But for all this show of virtue, Stoicism has not a moral basis. It is founded on an abstract idea of the nature of the All, not rooted in the human heart; it calls upon man to renounce his own experience of pain and pleasure for a theory of life which is hard, cold, and comfortless; it deprives man of any incentive to self-sacrifice for others, not allowing to virtue even "the wages of going on," but making life end in reabsorption into seminal principles — a philosophic term for something that has no corresponding reality in experience. So it destroys true personality by taking it out of real relations with our fellow-men here and now, and identifying it with a theoretic relation to the incomprehensible, intangible, unthinkable *All* of which it has the cold comfort of being a part, whatever that may mean. Stoicism, therefore, becomes a philosophy of resignation, renuncia-

tion, flight from self and the world: not to lose one's self in the service of humanity as Jesus taught, but to be merged into the seminal principles of universal reason. The end is pantheism (an all-pervading, impersonal mind in the place of a Heavenly Father), and its corollary quietism (endurance of the inevitable, instead of the betterment of the actual). True personality, which lives only in its relations with others, is lost. "The individual withers, and the world — a term which is empty of meaning except for the individual who makes and comprehends it — the world is more and more." Stoicism is a confession of defeat for humanity in the contest with fate, however bravely and nobly that defeat may be borne. It takes refuge in abstractions and generalities — an abstract law, an abstract country, and abstract man, etc., none of which things has existence or meaning. Therefore, while its morality remained strong and invigorating, and passed into the new Christian scheme especially as forming the model and often the content for the Christian sermon, its foundations were swept away with the antique world and gave place to the supernatural realism of the Church.

Marcus Aurelius belonged to the old order. The world of Roman polytheism and the Greek philosophies was dying. The widening empire,

daily more cosmopolitan, absorbing every type of civilization, had loosened the bonds of attachment to the fatherland, and men outside of Christianity had no moral unity to substitute in its place. A time of anarchy and violence succeeded the Antonines. Profligate Syrians wore the imperial purple; the soldier rabble made and unmade the world's rulers. There were a few spasmodic and desperate attemps to stay the rising tide of the new faith, a few fierce persecutions, a few Romans of the old type, until an emperor came to the throne a century and a quarter later than Marcus Aurelius, who had the wisdom to give up the old and accept the new. Constantine opens the new Roman world of the Church, as Aurelius closes the old Roman world of the State.

V

We have grown beyond the worship of imperial divinities. The "Numen Antoninum" is a superstition now along with all the hero cults of antiquity. But at the same time as we humanize our saints we sanctify our men. As a good man (the world's sorest need) Marcus Aurelius Antoninus grows from age to age greater and greater. He belongs to that "high order of men who are ruled not by expectation, but by the sense of obligation; who do not the

agreeable, but the just." He occupied a position where the white light of publicity beat upon his life, and yet the beauty of his character has suffered no shadowed hint of calumny. He made profession of the highest moral standard, and withal neither contemporaries nor posterity has wished to accuse him of words outrunning deeds. "He failed," to return at last to the splendid praise of Matthew Arnold, "neither in small things nor in great; he kept watch over himself, both that the great springs of action might be right in him, and that the minute details of action might be right also. . . . And so he remains the especial friend and comforter of all clear-headed and scrupulous, yet pure-hearted and upward-striving men, in those ages most especially that walk by sight, not by faith, and yet have no open vision. . . . He is one of those consoling and hope-inspiring marks which stand forever to remind our weak and easily discouraged race how high human goodness and perseverance have once been carried, and may be carried again."

CHAPTER VII

AUGUSTINE, THE SCHOOLMASTER OF THE MIDDLE AGES

"O God, within my breast,
Almighty, ever present Deity,
Life that in me has rest,
As I, undying life, have forever in thee."
—EMILY BRONTË.

THE work humanity sets for itself, like the work a busy, useful man sets for himself, is never done. And, consequently, if we surprise history at any epoch of time, as a busy man at any hour in his life, we shall find that midway chaos which is indispensable to final completeness; we shall find a large amount of unfinished business and a great deal of new business, retrospects and prospects, adjustment to truth won in experience, and aspiration to new truths conceived in the ideal, all intermingled to make the age or the man of our present consideration. This is only saying, in other words, the truth, which is so true that it has become trite, that "every age is an age of transition." But, though every age be an age of transition in the

development of a man, there are nevertheless crises, physical and moral, in a man's life which are felt to be peculiarly times of transition. So in human history there are ages big with mighty moral issues and saved for mighty moral tasks, which we may call *the* ages of transition in human history. Such an age were the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. in Greece, when the ideals of the most cultured nation the world has ever seen were chastened to perfection, and expressed for the world's lasting admiration in works of perfect harmony in architecture, poetry, and sculpture. Such an age was the sixteenth century of our era, when all over Europe men began to apply to life in its relations to Church and State the wisdom they had been slowly gathering from the revival of the study of the classic models of antiquity. These were ages of tremendous spiritual significance. The world and its history have been decidedly different on their account. Their leaders, Æschylus, Pheidias, Socrates, Luther, More, and Beza, have changed the face of Europe as well as have the leaders of armies,—Eugene, Frederick, Napoleon.

Now one of these decided ages of transition in human history was the epoch marked by the closing years of the Roman Empire in the West, the barbarian invasions, and the consolidation of the Church of the West as a single magnifi-

cent instrument in the hands of the Roman papacy, that is to say, the years from 400 to 600 A.D. In those years the remnants of the spiritual and political legacy bequeathed by the old Græco-Roman world to the Middle Ages were collected in the new Roman Church, and worked over into a form fit for the instruction and unification of the peoples who were to form the great French, English, Spanish, Scandinavian, and German nations. The legions of republican Rome had conquered the world by arms; now the priests of Rome set out for a second time to conquer the world for the Church. Beyond the Alps there was fresh life coursing through the land from Caledonia to the Rhine and to the pillars of Hercules. Barbarians they might be — heretics, Arians, Druids, heathen; the one thing needful was that the name of *Rome* still inspired them with awe and spoke of glory. The old world repudiated Rome — Rome won a new world. She turned in time to other arms than those of the Emperor of Constantinople. She grew with the growing West; the fortunes of Pippin, of Charlemagne, and of Alfred the Great were henceforth the fortunes of Rome. The prophecy of the reign of Marcus Aurelius was fulfilled. The ancient world came to an end, and on the ruins of the temples of the Cæsars were built the churches of Christ.

The transition from the Rome of the Cæsars to the Rome of the Church was one of travail and sorrow. Only out of great tribulation did fair Italy, mother of the nations, come through the dreadful years of the barbarian migrations. Seven times between the years 404 and 557 did the scourge out of the north pass over the land, destroying memories, blotting out hopes, and paralyzing the power of labouring for high ideals, in five generations of men. The state was despaired of, the empire was divided, and the Holy City itself, which, since the days when the Gauls had murdered the white-bearded senators in their curule chairs, eight centuries past, had not seen the enemy within its sacred walls, was trampled by the rude foot of the barbarian Goth. Well might it seem as if the twilight of men and gods alike had come over the earth. Whither should men flee for safety? What could stand when Rome had fallen — *urbs æterna*, the city everlasting?

I

There was a man in Africa who had an answer ready — an answer which he spent the last forty years of his life to prepare. The city of the earth had fallen, but the "city of God" was eternal in the heavens. To the *civitas terrena*

should succeed the *civitas Dei;* to the *pax Romana,* the *pax cœlestis.*

The Church which St. Augustine gave to the Roman kingdoms of the West lasted in all its essentials as he had conceived it until the days of the Reformation — a thousand years. The men are few in the world's history whose ideas have ruled a thousand years. They are giant figures, these millennial kings of the spiritual realm. And though we have passed beyond the years of the despotism of authority to the era of the freedom of a spiritual democracy, still we must look back with wonder to those strong men of ancient days who have fired thousands and hundreds of thousands of souls with the enthusiasm of absolute discipleship.

St. Augustine was the "Schoolmaster of the Middle Ages." There is not a single important feature in the life of the Church (that is to say in the life of the West) between the years of the barbarian migrations and the renaissance of learning that is not stamped with mark of Augustine's genius. The great emperor-popes, Nicholas, Gregory, and Innocent, learned their exalted doctrine of the Church from him; the mystics, Bernard, Suso, and Tauler, lived in the ecstatic atmosphere of Augustine's "Confessions"; his genius in logic furnished the Schoolmen with their models of theological dialectics; his pas-

sionate cult of the Lord of pity and pardon, who humbled himself to the form of a servant, awakened a response in the all-sacrificing lives of the brothers of St. Francis and St. Dominic; and even the heretics and schismatics of the Middle Ages, in their protest against a church which dispensed grace according to its own estimate of merit, pointed triumphantly to St. Augustine, the greatest of the fathers of the Church, who declared that the unmerited grace of the all-good God alone pardoned, called, justified, and redeemed men. A man who could be the inspiration at once of Hildebrand, Bernard, Francis of Assisi, Jacob Boehme, Martin Luther, Jannsen, Pascal, Bossuet, and Schleiermacher, surely deserves to be known more than by name alone.

Aurelius Augustinus was born on the 13th of November, 354 A.D., in the little town of Tagaste, in North Africa. His father Patricius was a man of no extraordinary type, but ambitious enough for his son's advancement to make the sacrifice necessary to send him in his seventeenth year to the university of the great African metropolis, Carthage. It was rather from his mother, the sainted Monica, to whom he pays such affecting tribute in the "Confessions," that Augustine inherited the traits which made him great: the deep religious fervour of the Semitic, the thirst for harmony of thought and peace of soul, the

emotional fire of African, tender and lasting affections, and the gift of devotion to a conviction of the heart, moved by love, unchanged by the conclusions of logic, and unshaken by the assaults of scepticism.

Augustine's life falls into two great periods, separated from each other by the crisis of his conversion to the Catholic faith and Church in the year 386, the thirty-third year of his life. Up to that time we follow him in his remarkable autobiography or "Confessions," through his wild youth, his uneasy employment, his baffled search for philosophic truth, his restless travels, and his tentative resting-places in Manichæism, Scepticism, and Neo-Platonism. We are forced to confess that the net result of Augustine's pre-Christian life was misery. "O Lord . . . thou hast burst asunder my chains, I will sacrifice to thee the sacrifice of praise. For who was I, and what sort of man? What evil was not in my deeds, or if not in my deeds, in my words, or if not in words, in my will? But thou, Lord, art good and merciful; thou didst mark the depths of my death and take the abyss of corruption from my heart. But where was my consent of will so many years, and from what secret heights and depths was it called in that moment when I bent my neck beneath thine easy yoke, and gave my shoulders to thy light burden, Christ Jesus, my

help and my salvation? How sweet it suddenly became for me then to lack the futile sweets of trifles, and what joy to leave what I had once feared to lose! Thou didst cast them from me, thou true and greatest delight, and didst enter in their place, sweeter than all pleasures . . . clearer than all illumination . . . loftier than all honours . . . and I babbled to thee my joy, O my light, my riches, and my salvation."

Too much rhetoric, perhaps; but Augustine was an African: he spoke out all his heart.

The second period of Augustine's life from his entrance into the Church until his death (387–430) was as peaceful in spirit as the earlier years had been stormy. For thirty-nine years he was connected with the Church of Hippo Regius, an African town not far from his birthplace, first as Presbyter, 392–395, and then for thirty-five years as bishop, to his death in 430. In this second period of his life we know him not from any biography or autobiography, but from his voluminous writings, exegetical and polemical, in the service of the Catholic Church. In the first half of his life our interest is centred in Augustine's search for truth; in the last in his defence of it. And while the last is, of course, of infinitely more value for the Church, the first is of far more interest to the student of

human character; we must try to be fair to both periods of Augustine's life.

Now we shall not be sacrificing truth to rhetorical symmetry if we subdivide each of these two periods of Augustine's life into three chapters. In the first period there were three stages of struggle passed through before he reached spiritual peace in the Catholic Church, — Manichæism, Scepticism, and Neo-Platonism. In the second period there were three foes of Catholic doctrine and unity against which he waged, almost single-handed, a valiant battle,— Manichæism, Donatism, and Pelagianism. Let us look at the man in relation to these determining crises and interests of his life.

II

Augustine was born of a Christian mother. "He drew in the teachings of Christ," he says, "with his mother's milk." As a child, the Christian faith in God's providence and power was as real to him as his life. He used to pray at school that he would not be beaten. Even as late as his nineteenth year, after he had strayed far from the paths of uprightness and purity pointed out to him in his mother's teaching, when he was roused to better aspirations by reading the "Hortensius," a philosophical book of Cicero's — even then, I say, the old leaven of

his early faith so worked in him that he complained because the name of Christ was not found on the pages of the book which inspired him. He never quite lost the influence, stronger than mere memory, of the early piety and prayers inculcated by his mother, and he regarded his conversion rather as the long-delayed return to his first love than as the discovery of any new or strange thing. "I have loved thee late," he cries in his "Confessions"; "I have loved thee late, thou beauty so old and so new. Lo! thou wast within, but I was without, and I searched for thee there. . . . Thou wast with me, but I was not with thee. . . . Thou didst call, and louder call, till thou didst break my deafness; thou didst shine in splendour, and scatter my night; thou didst break and subdue my spirit, till I pant for thee. I have tasted, and I hunger and thirst. Thou hast touched me, and I have kindled in thy peace."

But the faith which seemed so simple, so solving, so final to the man of thirty-three, after fifteen years of struggle for light, repelled the youth of eighteen. Augustine had been roused, we remember, in his nineteenth year, by the reading of Cicero's "Hortensius," "a call to the study of philosophy." So great was the impression made by the book, that Augustine dates his return to peace and God from the day he

read it. "That book changed my affections and turned my prayers to thee, O Lord. . . . At once all unworthy hopes and ambitions grew cheap in my sight, and I longed for the immortality of wisdom with unspeakable desire; and then I began to rise and to return to thee." But when Augustine began, under this new and noble inspiration, to study the Bible and Christian dogma, he was repelled and offended in his study. He found the style of the Bible crude and rough in comparison with classic models. His taste, vitiated by the tawdry melodramatic finery of the African stage, found little gratification in the literature of the Hebrew prophets, the theological treatises of St. Paul, or the unadorned narrative of the Gospels. He was especially offended in the character of God in the Old Testament. The Church, in its prosaic, legalistic, western guise, had no attraction for him. It seemed stupid to him, its doctors uncouth men, and its dogmas unsifted prejudices. Now there was spread over Africa, as indeed all over the West, a quasi-religious sect called Manichæans, from their first prophet Manes (215–268). Manes was a Persian by birth, a Christian by education, a man well versed in the esoteric teachings of the Jews, the gnostics, and the philosophic mystics of the East. In an effort to find some universal religious faith out of all

these jarring elements, Manes created a system composed of equal parts of mythology, religion, and morality. Mind and matter, according to Manes, are locked in a deadly and never ending battle. The principle of matter created the first man, but in his nature was mixed a ray of the light of heaven, forming his soul. The soul, ever struggling to be released from its prison-house, the body, was aided by a Being sent from God from the solar regions. This Being, Christ, appeared among the Jews, clad in the shadowy form of a mortal body, and taught them and mankind how, by virtue and asceticism, to free the rational soul from the evil body, *i.e.* to conquer matter by spirit. This dualism of light and darkness, and suffering and deliverance, was not confined to man alone, but extended through all nature, making the system of Manes rich in symbolism and adaptable to ancient mythology. The followers of Manes, like almost all adherents to the ancient religions, were divided into two classes, — the "elect" or "perfected," and the "hearers." The "elect" practised the most extreme form of asceticism, abstaining from animal food, intoxicating drink, marriage, private possessions, etc., while upon the "hearers" was imposed only the restraint of temperance in all these things. The Manichæans were a sect of the utmost confidence in their own teachings,

and fond of an ostentatious display of superiority of intellect over the Catholics. They boasted themselves as the "liberals" and "progressives" of their day, and affected to look with indulgent contempt on those benighted people who could still adhere to the Christian doctrine in the bald, prosaic form in which it was offered by the Church of Tertullian and Cyprian. The words *science, virtue, truth,* were ever on their lips.

The young Augustine, with his fresh stimulus to a better life, and his failure to be satisfied with the Christian theology of North Africa, turned with relief to these Manichæans. Their poetic mythology of nature satisfied his æsthetic cravings; their lofty words about truth and virtue promised him a religion of highest ethical endeavour joined to deepest philosophical insight. He joined their sect as a "hearer."

But the longer Augustine studied and thought, the less did the highly spiced food of Manichæism satisfy his spiritual cravings. He found the doctrines filled with insincerities, and the lives of their professors with gross inconsistencies. Finally, in a personal interview with their acknowledged leader himself, a certain Faustus, Augustine was so disappointed and disgusted that the religion of Manes then and there lost to him what little significance it still had. Still

Augustine did not yet desert the Manichæan circles to which he had belonged for nine years. He was about to set out for Rome when he had his interview with Faustus in Carthage, and when he came to Rome, in the year 383, he still consorted with the followers of Manes, because, as he says himself, "he had as yet found nothing better."

During the two years that Augustine spent as a teacher of rhetoric in Rome he failed to find "anything better" than Manichæism; and, as that last was a dead creed for him, he sank inevitably into the chilling waters of scepticism. He was not the sort of nature that could wait and watch alone for the morning of truth to dawn upon him; he craved to be ushered into the full noonday of truth. That promise was what first attracted him to the religion of Manes. He had not learned, as the Italian philosopher so finely phrased it, "to sleep on the pillow of doubt." He must know; he must have authorities over him and fellow-believers about him. So even his scepticism was not of the mild, resigned sort that has characterized so many great souls who have been obliged and content to remain agnostics. It was not the disposition of Marcus Aurelius, for example; but it was a bitter, restless, militant scepticism; a self-imposed mandate not to believe where the heart was

longing to believe; a bitter virtue of intellect, which brought him no satisfaction, but only regret and torment.

So the days passed in Rome, and to Augustine's distress of soul was added a keen disappointment in his Roman scholars. He found them less boisterous than the Carthaginian youths, to be sure, but also less honourable. They did not fulfil their contracts, were slovenly in their attendance, and left the courses often in large numbers by mere caprice of will. A sensitive nature like Augustine's was kept doubly miserable by this unpardonable rudeness.

When, therefore, the invitation came to Augustine in 385, through Symmachus, the prefect of Rome, to remove to Milan, he was glad to accept the new post. Milan was the second city in size and importance in all Italy. During the awful years of anarchy in the West, from the death of Constantine to the union of the empire under Theodosius (337–395), Milan was for the greater part of the time the imperial residence; and during the latter years of the fourth century it was made especially famous by the labours of its great bishop Ambrose, up to that time, with the exception of Cyprian, the greatest bishop in the entire Church of the West.

Augustine, as a teacher of rhetoric, heard the sermons of the great Ambrose, and was cap-

tivated by them. He went to criticise the style of the composition and delivery of the great preacher, as he himself tells us, with sceptical indifference to the matter of the sermons. But he remained to ponder over the message of the preacher. Gradually he felt himself drawn by the Christianity Ambrose preached; it did not seem so full of crudities, inconsistencies, and difficulties as that doctrine he had been repelled by in Africa. Extensive acquaintance and lively sympathy with the more æsthetic, pliant theology of the Greek Fathers had made Ambrose a preacher of great breadth, power, and humaneness. Especially welcome to Augustine was Ambrose's use of the allegorical method of Old Testament exegesis, in which, by virtue of graceful interpretations after the manner of the Platonic myth, the hard literalism of many Old Testament passages was changed into a beautiful symbolism.

As a result of Ambrose's preaching, Augustine came back to the faith of his infancy and childhood. He became a "catechumen" (or probationer) in 386, gave up his position as teacher of rhetoric, and retired to a country place near Milan to prepare himself by meditation, reading, and the converse of a few choice friends for his baptism. His mother, who had come from Africa to join him in Milan, was of the party in the quiet retreat.

Augustine has left us a charming picture in his "Confessions" of their life among the fields and orchards of their country villa; but we have not time to yield to the temptation to tarry there with him, and listen to the discourses on Plato and Platonism (for Augustine had turned to the study of Plato even before his awakening by Ambrose). On Easter day, 387, Augustine was baptized by Ambrose in the church still represented by a fine old Romanesque basilica of the twelfth century in the extreme western quarter of Milan.

III

With the ceremony of his baptism into the Christian Church the first period of Augustine's life came to a close. He accepted then and there the full authority of the one holy Catholic Church. The controversies which fill the second part of his life did not increase his faith or sensibly modify his doctrine. He came from the baptismal font full-armed against the heresies and schisms he was to combat. His creed was in substance this: a God all-good, mankind all-corrupt, a salvation all of God's unmerited grace, effective only in God's appointed way, namely, through the sacraments of the holy Catholic Church. From these simple propositions the whole of Augustine's interpretation of Chris-

tianity, as it is contained in the eleven ponderous volumes of the Benedictine Fathers, may be constructed. There is, of course, a quantity of foreign matter mixed therewith, — allegory, strained exegesis, an elaborate philosophy of history (the first ever written), sermons, Neo-Platonic speculation, monastic counsels, etc.; but nevertheless through it all runs one purpose like a scarlet thread, the message, namely, of a God utterly good, calling men utterly bad to communion with Himself through the sacred channels of the Church and its sacraments.

The external circumstances of Augustine's life from the time of his conversion need detain us very little longer. He started with his mother, his brother Navigius, and his illegitimate son Adeodatus to return to Carthage. The mother of Adeodatus, with whom Augustine had lived some thirteen years, had been dismissed at the time of his conversion. Augustine's treatment of this unfortunate woman, who had so long been his true and faithful companion, is, according to our modern standards of chivalry and honour, the worst blot on his character. He should have married her, not thrown her off to suffer in separation from himself and her child. But we have to bear in mind always the prevailing ideas of the civilization in which men act and live. In the last years of the Roman

Empire a woman without name or family was rather to be congratulated that she was kept for thirteen years than to be pitied because she was then dismissed. We do not discover that even the sainted Monica was greatly disturbed either by this woman's presence or her departure. Probably the fact that her son was outside the fold of the Catholic Church troubled Monica more than the fact that he was living with a concubine. We return from this unpleasant digression to the party *en route* for Africa only to bid good-by to the beautiful character that up to now has, through all the murkiness of sin, struggle, and despair, been Augustine's guiding star — his mother. Monica — St. Monica in the Roman calendar — died at Ostia, at the mouth of the Tiber, whence she and her sons were about to set sail for Carthage. A conversation between Augustine and his mother in the last days at Ostia is made the subject of a familiar painting by the Frenchman Ary Scheffer, which hangs in the Louvre, at Paris. There is too much sentimentality and too little strength in the picture; but one thing it brings out admirably, — the dreamy, emotional intensity of the African. Augustine is absolutely incomprehensible without the recognition in him of the fundamentality of heart-promptings. He had his creed, his confidence, from a conviction of

the heart. He strove then to explain, or to rationalize, what he could. Beyond the realm and reach of reason there still was left a main residuum of conviction, and at the borders of this new realm his reason melted into awe and wonder. He drops the syllogism and exclaims, "Oh, the marvel of the riches of the Grace of God!" So he appears in the painting in the Louvre; the mystic tenseness is in his face as he sits beside his happy mother—

> "Their dear consenting hands are knit,
> And either face, as there they sit,
> Is lifted as to something seen
> Beyond the blue serene."

Augustine did not sail for Carthage immediately after his mother's death, but returned to Rome for a short visit, during which he began his literary activity as a Catholic Christian by writing two books against Manichæan morals. As Augustine himself had for so many years been led astray by the false mythology of Manes, he perhaps felt it his special duty as a Catholic Christian to combat this heresy. Between the years 389 and 404 he wrote many works (most important of which was "Against Faustus the Manichæan," in thirty-three volumes) to uphold the scriptural doctrine of creation out of nothing, the harmony of the Old and New Testaments, the accord between the Christian revelation and

nature; on the origin of evil, on free-will, and on the supreme authority of Scripture and the Church.

But Augustine had more important duties before him than the refutation of the Manichæan vagaries when he returned to Africa. He was called to be a presbyter in the Church of Hippo Regius, a town of considerable importance, not far from his birthplace, Tagaste; and in 395 he was chosen to fill the vacant bishopric of the same church. In this office he continued thirty-five years, until his death. The man who has influenced the western Church far more lastingly than any archbishop, metropolitan, or pope, never occupied an office higher than the bishopric of a North African town!

IV

A detailed study of the two great controversies which occupied Augustine during the thirty-five years of his bishopric, and which called out thousands of pages of theological polemics from his powerful pen, though essential to the valuation of St. Augustine as an orthodox Father of the Church, would be of little use to us as students of the man Augustine and his contribution to the world's spiritual capital. We shall therefore content ourselves with the briefest presentation of the nature and outcome of these

two controversies, — the Donatist and the Pelagian. The first concerned the unity and authority of the Church (ecclesiastical); the second, and far more important, concerned the doctrines of original sin and free grace (theological).

During the severe persecution of the Christians all over the Roman Empire by Diocletian, the predecessor of Constantine, a favourite method of coercion among the persecutors had been to demand of the Christians the surrender of their sacred books. Some Christian priests yielded, and were called for it *traditores*, or traitors; others employed the ruse of substituting false books (*libelli*), which the agents of persecution were unable to distinguish from the sacred Scriptures. Now both *traditores* and *libellarii* were regarded as having forfeited the right to the name Christian by the sterner, more uncompromising wing of the Church, whose seat was preëminently in the African land. By the laxer party in the Church, however, whose cue had been taken from Rome during the half century preceding Diocletian's persecution, these weak and erring brothers were received again into the communion and honour of the Church. It came to a break between the parties in the year 311, when the extreme party refused to recognize the regularly elected bishop of Carthage, on the ground that he had been consecrated by a *tradi-*

tor. They formed a schism from the Catholic Church, elected their own bishop and presbyters, and shunned all contact with the contaminated communion which had appointed trimmers and cowards to administer its sacred rites. Despite the sincere pains of Constantine and his successor Constans to mediate between the parties, the breach only grew wider. The Donatists prided themselves on their unswerving loyalty to the primitive ethics of the apostolic Church. Their bishop, Donatus of Carthage, from whom the sect was named, flung back in the face of Constans the proud challenge, "What has the Church to do with Cæsar?" Though past the first fury of its bitterness in Augustine's day, the controversy between the Catholics and the Donatists was still so sharp that Augustine was moved to call upon the Emperor Honorius in 404 to use the arm of the state against the persistent heretics. It was not the first employment of that dreadful perversion of Jesus' mandate, "Compel them to come in." Seven years later, in 411, despite imperial edicts and Catholic threats, the Donatists were more numerous in Africa than their opponents; for in that year 297 Donatist priests assembled for the great dispute in Carthage as against 286 Catholics.

In his numerous works against the Donatists,

composed between the years 393 and 420, Augustine argues against separation from the true fold, and develops his doctrine of the Church, its discipline and sacraments. The Donatists maintained that this discipline and these sacraments were efficacious only in the hands of *holy* men. Augustine maintained for the Catholics that they were efficacious in the hands of *consecrated* men. In other words, the sacraments, in Augustine's view, had their own divine merit, quite apart from and unaffected by the personal merit or demerit of their ministrant. The priest was only an agent; the holiness of the sacrament, the baptismal water or the eucharistic bread, was from God, and was ordained by God to be efficacious only in his one holy Catholic, undivided Church.

The Catholic view, under St. Augustine, triumphed, though the last vestiges of Donatism, the first great national Church movement, were swept away only with the barbarian Vandals' invasion of Africa.

The consequences of the Augustinian doctrine of the Church are easy to see: an institution holy, divine, eternal, as God is holy, divine, eternal. That this transcendent, God-preëmpting, salvation-dispensing institution came down through the Middle Ages with ever increasing momentum of authority, absorbing the religion,

the national consciousness, the courts, the camps, the laws, the politics, the art, the literature, the thought, the memories, the hopes, the bodies, the souls of generation after generation of Europe's millions, is due more to the writings of St. Augustine, the theological text-book of the Middle Ages, than to any other single factor.

Martin Luther effectively reopened the Donatist schism in the sixteenth century, when he broke away from the sacraments and authority of the papal Church. That Church found no Augustine then to defend it, and lost the northern lands of Europe to Protestantism. It reaffirmed the Augustinian doctrine of the independent value of the sacraments, however, at the great anti-Reformation Council of Trent in the middle of the sixteenth century.

The Donatists attacked the Church only in its administration of the sacraments of baptism, penance, the Lord's Supper, etc.; they did not for a moment question the need of these sacraments or lack faith in the theological system which underlay them — the utter corruption of nature and the one remedy through acceptance of the grace of God in Christ. They were not heretics, but schismatists. They failed not in faith, but in love. They disturbed not the Church's divinity, but its unity.

But the other theological foes that Augustine

had to meet as defender of Catholic doctrine were far more dangerous and far more able. The Donatists were confined to Africa; the Pelagians, or rather Pelagian influences, permeated the Christian world from Gaul to Palestine, and even infected at one time the holy seat of St. Peter.

About the year 410 Pelagius, a British monk in Rome, read in Augustine's "Confessions" the famous prayer, "Give what thou dost command, and command what thou dost wish" (*Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis*). Pelagius was an earnest northern nature, practical, sincere, little given to the nice discussion of theological subtleties, but still less open to the influences of that mystic exaltation of soul which had dictated the poetry of the "Confessions." He thought it a shame that so great a doctor as Augustine should indirectly further and favour the supineness, laxity, and immorality of the Church by teaching men that they had no power to make their lives better. So long as the Church taught the impossibility of a holy life, and the clergy lived up to its teaching, Pelagius saw no hope for ethical and spiritual improvement. He therefore combatted the sentence and the doctrine of Augustine, claiming that it was in the power of men to will the good constantly, and that such men had the aid of God's grace in winning the good.

To make our spiritual betterment a matter of God's concern alone, to shut a man out from any active participation in his own redemption, seemed to Pelagius to cut the nerve of moral effort, and end in fatalism, pure and simple. Moreover, Augustine's position seemed open to refutation by the simplest sort of a dilemma. If sin was of God, then God lost his holiness and was not entitled to man's worship; if sin was of man, then the responsibility for sin was with man in its origin and in its continuance, and it devolved upon man to meet this responsibility by the noble resolve to do better, and to ask God's grace to help him. Locating the origin of sin in anything else, power or person, than God or man, was to destroy the unity of God's power and return to the old heathen or Christian mythologies.

We cannot follow the Pelagian controversy in detail. Pelagius himself, after a short stay in Africa, during which he made the acquaintance of Augustine personally, went to the East, where, despite the fierce persecution of St. Jerome, his heresy failed to excite sufficient interest or antagonism to secure his condemnation. The Greeks cared little for those aspects of theology that concerned sin, grace, law, and punishment. They found the sum of their doctrine in the definition of the person of Christ as a celestial

Being whose divinity, appropriated through the mysteries of faith, conferred immortality, or release from the material bonds of the body. Their religion has always been, and is to-day, a philosophy, not an ethics. It was in the West, under the great leaders of Africa and Italy, that the theology of transgression and punishment was developed. These men, Tertullian, Cyprian, Ambrose, Novatian, were never weary of the theme —

> "Of man's first disobedience and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world and all our woes."

And so, though Pelagius himself had vanished from the arena of the West, it was there that his battle was fought. Cœlestius, his companion to Africa in 411, had remained in that country and secured a priest's office there. With far greater skill and passion than Pelagius he developed the theology of man's free-will and ever present responsibility, carrying on a fierce running fight with Augustine until condemned and excommunicated by the Carthaginian council of 412. Pope Zosimus in 418 secured the expulsion by the emperor of all bishops who held to Pelagian tenets. Among the bishops to suffer by this imperial decree of 418 was Julian of Eclanum, a town of southern Italy. Julian took up the pen from his retreat in the East in defence of the

most radical Christianity ever proposed until the day of Socinius, founder of modern Unitarianism. Julian was brilliant, merciless in his logic, sparing neither sarcasm nor thunder in the exposure and refutation of the inconsistencies and irrationalism of the Augustinian system. He was the greatest genius with whom Augustine ever crossed swords; it was a battle of giants. Unfortunately the writings of Julian, like those of every heretic abominated by the triumphant Church, are lost; but we can almost reconstruct them from the quotations in Augustine's replies. They are the last plea before the millennial triumph of Catholic dogma for the philosophy and ethics of the Stoic moralists, the last echo of the rationalism of Aristotle and Cicero — that Cicero whose book had first roused in Augustine the promptings of his better nature. "What reason does not make clear, that authority cannot justify," said Julian; and again: "Nothing can be approved by holy Scripture that justice cannot defend . . . Judgments are to be weighed, not counted merely, for a multitude of blind men are of no advantage in finding the truth . . . the very meagreness of that minority which reason, learning, and freedom has elevated is its honour." He accused Augustine of imbecility in maintaining that God could reward his own works in man; of a lingering Manichæism in his

condemnation of marriage and his excessive praise of the monastic state; of irrationality in expecting any man to love God and virtue without confidence in his ability to attain thereto; and of sentimentality and vulgar ecstasy in his published "Confessions."

It was no courteous and guarded interchange of letters, the polemic of those days. Augustine wrote a treatise on "Marriage" in 418, upholding the ascetic view of the perfection of celibacy. Julian, highly displeased with the work, replied in four volumes. Augustus answered in six, and Julian replied again "for the moment" in eight. Augustine was still at work on his final reply, which had already reached six volumes, when he was interrupted by death in 430: twelve years' strife and twenty-four volumes over a pamphlet on marriage!

Whether Augustine ever truly answered Julian or not must be left to the judgment of the man who reads the one side of the controversial writings that survive. He triumphed over Julian in the court of the day, and the Pelagian doctrine found no further champion until the dawn of the modern age. With Julian the last foe of the transcendent Church, the saving institution of the alone-good God, who by His sovereign grace according to His own will, chooses some men for life eternal, and leaves others to eternal

death in the fires of hell, perished; and the system of St. Augustine prevailed.

"System" is hardly the word; let us say rather St. Augustine's *theology* prevailed, for his theology was not, and could not be, reduced to a system. It needs no very close study of it to see how many are the inconsistencies and breaks in it. For example, how can grace be the absolute predestinated gift of God and still be dependent on the sacraments of the Church; how can tradition as embodied in the creed be the sum of Christianity, and still the new experience of forgiveness be the fountain of all a man's religion; how can that Scripture be the Church's foundation charter of which he says, "I would not believe Scripture unless moved thereto by the authority of the Catholic Church;" and, above all, how can such logic stand as accepts for one premise a clause of the creed? God allows evil; but God, according to the first sentence of the creed, is only-good; hence the permission of evil is good. Or again such a circle as this, "Man sins when he lives not according to God, but according to man." Yet according to Augustine, man was first made good, all-good. He could not be changed by the good God, but only by sin (since Augustine will have none of the Manichæan mythology of a second, bad God). Therefore sin is the first

cause of sin, which is a meaningless piece of nonsense.

V

The criticism of Augustine's theology, however, is not our theme; that work was done by Julian, and to my poor thinking finally done, fifteen hundred years ago. We are interested, at the close of this study of the great man who impressed himself on the Church of all the succeeding centuries, in asking what was the power of his magnificent influence? why was he one of the world's spiritual heroes? One will have discovered ere this that, for myself, I am not an admirer of the Augustinian theology. I believe that we have less to learn from him to-day than from any other of the men whose life and work we are studying together. I believe we are, with our present views of ethics, far nearer the religion of Jeremiah than the religion of Augustine. Augustine was essentially a man of the Middle Ages. Standing at their opening, he anticipates and epitomizes the Middle Ages: their bondage to authority, their triumph of theology, their centralization in Rome, their intolerance of heresy, their contempt for individualism of power, opinion, or expression, their confusion of virtue with abstinence, of philosophy with dogma, and of science with black art and super-

stition. We have outgrown the Middle Ages and count the things of the Middle Ages as no longer blessings. So we have outgrown Augustine, I believe, and he is as a whole no longer a blessing.

Yet as we get far enough from men of the past to see them in better perspective, we are also able better to separate in them the transient and the permanent. And even if most of the work of St. Augustine does belong to the transient, there is still left one trait, one very great trait, in him which belongs to the permanent. That is the restless, unquenchable courage with which he sought spiritual goods, when once aroused from the starving diet of the husks of a life of self-indulgence and worldly ambitions. The God which resulted from his theological contest with the Donatists and Pelagians may be a heartless, repulsive figure for us, but the God whom he found in his own soul as the earnest of a life of endless praise and endeavour in the good was that true God that lighteth every one who seeks His light. It was by the things Augustine allowed to be added to his religion that his religion was perverted. He strove to reconcile all the tradition of the Church, in an age already vitiated by gross misinterpretations of Christianity, with his own conviction of God's grace. His theology is

rabbinical. Nothing more strikingly illustrates the impossible task Augustine set for himself in his encyclopædic theology than to compare his sources of religious authority with Luther's or those of to-day. Augustine had no less than four distinct sources to which he looked for final authority: philosophy, the Church, the Bible, the experience of faith. Luther reduced these to the last two, dropping speculative philosophy as heathenish and the papal Church as corrupt. To-day the primal authority of Scripture is practically gone, and the Protestant Church is holding largely to the single authority of the experience of faith. If the Christian world to-day hardly knows how to be consistently devoted to one standard of authority, how, then, could even a genius like Augustine's be reconciled to four?

We must, in short, separate the mass of perishable doctrine of the theologian Augustine from the message of lasting truth of the man's heart — the message of moral regeneration and spiritual peace. Then, though we fail to follow him in his Neo-Platonic flights in elucidation of the mystery of the Trinity, or in the laboured philosophy of history of the "City of God," we shall still feel him speaking to and with us in those magnificent testimonies to the power of the love of the all-good which fill even his

most barren page. We shall still look back with wonder to the man whose soul and brain were large enough to stamp their impress on the spiritual forces of Christendom for a thousand years. And, borrowing the phrase of the natives whose huts to-day stand on the site of ancient Hippo, where St. Augustine closed his eyes in peace, we shall still speak of the "Rumi Kebir" — the "great Christian."

CHAPTER VIII

MOHAMMED THE REVIVALIST OF SEMITISM

"All great ages have been ages of belief." — EMERSON.

A cask, on losing cross-boards from its head,
Is not more cleft than one whom then I saw
Rent from the chin to where the body ends.

. . . . . .

Whilst on beholding him my gaze was fixed,
He looked on me, and with his savage hand
Tore his breast open, saying : "See, now, see
How I am rent; how Mahomet goes torn.
Before me, weeping, Ali walks, he too
Cleft from the fore-lock to the chin, and others
Who, living, sowed discord and hateful schism.

DANTE'S grim picture of Mohammed wandering mutilated in one of the deepest circles of hell, among those who rent the unity of the faith of mankind by religious schisms, became the classic expression of the regard in which the Christian world, up to almost our own day, has held the great preacher and warrior of the Arabian peninsula. Mohammed has been abhorred as a crazy, heathen fanatic, a scourge permitted for some inscrutable cause to devastate Church in

Syria, Africa, and Spain; an impostor, a demoniac, a monster. And even when under the influence of the humanitarian forces of the close of the eighteenth century, the great religious and philosophical systems of the East began to be studied according to sound historical canons, it was still predominantly with a view toward defending Christianity against them, and not with the purpose of entering sympathetically into their spirit or recognizing their peculiar mission and merit. The whole temper of students of Mohammedanism, for example, up to our own generation, is well expressed in the words which the learned translator of the Persian traditions of Mohammedanism used in the year 1850. He says in his preface: "All who will ever find occasion practically to engage in controversy with Mohammedans should certainly gain as extensive an acquaintance as possible with Moslem authorities on Islam; for without this knowledge the most talented reasoner must enter the arena of argumentation under great disadvantage and with very small prospect of success."

So the noted biographers of the Arabian prophet (Sale, Morgan, Bush, Muir) conceived their work. They studied him and his religion not as something great, world-historic, and real, but as something dangerous and false, though by some mystery of Providence permitted — somewhat as

a Lutheran superintendent of the seventeenth century might study Roman Catholicism.

Now all that is quite changed, as much perhaps through the influence of Carlyle's appreciative essay on Mohammed in his "Heroes and Hero-Worship," as through any other single factor. The demon theory, and the fanatic theory, and the impostor theory, and the epileptic theory, and whatever other strange theories prejudiced critics have been at pains to devise to account for the fact and influence of Mohammed in the religious history of the world, have been put by as childish and inadequate; and the great man is being studied and valued as he deserves to be, as one of the world's very foremost spiritual heroes and kings. We may not go to the other extreme with Seyd Ameer Ali, an Indian Mohammedan and judge of the High Court of Bengal, who in his recent brilliant work on "The Spirit of Islam," claims for the Arabian prophet immunity from any sin of the heart or frailty of the flesh, unfairly weighing the best in Mohammedanism against the worst in Christianity, even as Christian writers have so often yielded to the temptation to emphasize the worst in other religions and the best in their own. Mohammed was a man of his times, a son of the desert, whose heart was in his word, and whose word was often harsh, and harsher still his action.

He was often cruel, often trivial, sometimes even (but very rarely) not above the temptation to sophistry and makeshift in his revelations. Yet these faults but temper our admiration for the man. We feel the more we study him that they were incidental, pardonable; and what was fundamental and worshipful in him greatly prevails. His splendid ideal of One Holy God in the midst of a nation of idolaters; his single-handed fight for the new and pure ideal; his tireless self-sacrifice; his magnificent military and political genius; his wisdom in estimating and employing men in his service as his cause grew in strength (a quality so admired in him and so emulated by the great Napoleon); his readiness to pardon private injury; his resolute renouncement of ease and luxury; his courage in adversity and his moderation in prosperity — all these traits mark him as the strong, true man whose life was an inestimable blessing to his nation, — yes, and to the world.

I

The huge, trapezoidal peninsula which falls away from near the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, between the Persian Gulf on the northeast and the Red Sea on the southwest is known as Arabia, the land of the Arab. Its habitable part, which runs like a narrow border along

three sides of the country between the seas without and the vaster sea of the desert within, has been peopled from time immemorial by a race of quick intellect, vigorous physique, passionate soul, and proud conservatism. In modern literature the Arabs have been called "The Italians of the East," and the comparison is apt even to the tint of their visage. They are a branch (the last to enter the world's history) of the great Semitic family, to which the Babylonians, Assyrians, Phœnicians, Hebrews, and Carthaginians belonged — all nations whose literature and exploits fill many pages in the history of civilization.

Before the end of the sixth century of our era, Arabian history was all unmade. "The Time of Ignorance" is the name the Moslems themselves give to the centuries before Mohammed. The land was occupied by scattered Bedouin tribes, held together by the most primitive of bonds, the blood tie; and worshipping divinities good and evil in sacred stones and springs, perhaps too in the stars. Even as early as our scanty knowledge of pre-Mohammedan Arabia begins, however, we find the Arabs of the southwest fringe of the peninsula united in the common worship yearly at Mecca, at the holiest of their shrines, the "Kaaba," or square house, for the sacred stone which fell from heaven; and near

by "Zem-Zem," the sacred well-spring which Hagar found when she wandered with Ishmael from Abraham's house.

There appear not to have been any priests connected with shrine of the Kaaba, but, instead, the custody of the holy place was in the hands of some powerful family, like the baronial clans of mediæval Rome, the Colonni and Frangipanni.

Toward the close of the sixth century of our era the clan of the Koreish was supreme in Mecca, and the venerable Abdul-Muttalib was its head. The favourite son of the patriarch, Abdullah by name, travelling to Yathreb in the year 570 on a business errand, was smitten with a fatal disease. A few days after his death, his widow, left in Mecca, gave birth to a son, who was called Mohammed, which signifies "praised." At the age of six the boy lost his mother also, and passed into the care of his grandfather, Abdul-Muttalib. Abdul the Venerable himself died three years later, and the boy of nine was taken into the family of his father's older brother, Abu Talib, who, during the forty years of life which remained to him, showed himself in every way faithful to the orphan son of his brother, as instructor, counsellor, and protector; although Abu Talib himself never accepted the new faith which Mohammed preached.

The young Mohammed accompanied his uncle

on one, and perhaps several, business journeys to Syria, where he came in contact with a civilization far different from that of his home land, which had never been trodden by the phalangites of Alexander or the legionaries of Rome. Here he saw the temples of the Syrian Christians, and perhaps wondered at the garb of some long-bearded monk or full-robed priest. It may be that he was even old enough to bring away some slight impression of the status of Syrian Christianity, which at this time, in common with the State Christianity of the entire East, had degenerated into a school for theological bickerings about the natures of Christ and the Virgin Mary, worthy of the palmiest days of mediæval scholasticism.

When Mohammed was twenty-five years old he took charge of a business caravan for a wealthy widow of forty named Kadisha, a woman likewise of the tribe of the Koreish. Kadisha was so well pleased with the fulfilment of the commission that she offered her hand to her young relative. The marriage, which lasted twenty-five years, to Kadisha's death, was a most happy one. The lady was sympathetic and accomplished; she could even read. When nobody else believed in Mohammed and his revelations, she became his first and most faithful convert, and even stood by him as his comforter and

champion. Mohammed compared her to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Toward the close of his life his favourite young wife, Ayesha, is said to have spoken once to him as follows: "Dost thou not love me better than thou didst love Kadisha; for I am young and fair, but she was old?" "No, by Allah!" responded the prophet, "not better than her; for she believed in me when none other did."

Somewhere about his fortieth year, Mohammed had a strange experience. He had long been accustomed, with his wife Kadisha and with her cousin Wakara, to retire at seasons from Mecca to a retreat on Mt. Hira, for contemplation; an exercise quite often practised by the more earnest-minded Arabs. On the occasion in question, Mohammed was mastered by a heavenly power which threw him into a violent state of nervous emotion, so that "beads of perspiration stood on his forehead"; and when he became aware of any sound or sight, it seemed as if an angel was standing before him with a scroll, and bidding him read. Now Mohammed, the son of the desert, could not read; but the angel insisted, and by endeavouring, the man was rewarded. The scroll became clear to him and he read: "Cry in the name of the Lord who created man from a drop. Cry, for the Lord is the Most High, who teacheth man by the pen

to know that which he knew not. Nay, man walketh in delusion when he deemeth that he sufficeth alone for himself. To thy Lord they must all return."

Greatly frightened, Mohammed hastened home to Kadisha crying: "O Kadisha, what is this that has happened to me!" He feared that a devil, which Arabs called a "djin," had taken possession of him. But his wife comforted him, and the good Wakara, who was a student and later a professor of Christianity, thought he saw in Mohammed's experience the fulfilment of the Paraclete's coming as prophesied in the Gospel of St. John.

Then after some considerable time the vision came again, and said to him: "Rise up and warn! Magnify thy Lord, purify thy garments, shun abominations [*i.e.* idolatry], and grant not favours to gain increase. Wait for thy Lord!"

This was a direct commission to preach, and Mohammed heeded it. Visions and revelations now came in rapid succession, all of which the new prophet accepted as the unqualified message of the Lord through his angel Gabriel. These revelations of the Lord to Mohammed have come down to us as the "Koran," or Mohammedan Bible, of which we shall speak later.

Mohammed's divine messages have been summarily dismissed by the prejudiced critics of the

past as the ravings of an epileptic or as the barefaced concoctions of an impostor. But how superficially invidious such judgments are appears on a moment's calm, unbiassed reflection. Do epileptics generally speak more wisely than sane men? Are the summons to purity, kindness, humility, the abandonment of idols, and the cessation of internecine warfare, the ravings of a lunatic? And so far as the impostor theory goes, that is, if anything, still more absurd. That a man of forty should think to begin a course of glory for himself by setting himself in opposition to the most powerful people of his nation, his own family even, and that, after ten years of such ample persecutions and such meagre successes as no other religion in its infancy has ever known, he should continue to believe in himself and his message with unabated zeal of conviction — this, I say, might possibly be the part of a madman (so strange does spiritual courage appear to us weak ones), but it could by no effort of imagination be construed as the work of an impostor.

In the ten years which elapsed between Mohammed's earliest revelation and the almost simultaneous deaths of his uncle and his wife (610–620), the cause of the prophet grew but scantily in Mecca. Still, some among the very few conversions were of great importance: that

of Abu Bekr and Othman, later the first and third caliphs of Islam respectively, and Mohammed's near relatives by marriage; of Hamza, an uncle of Mohammed's; and especially of Omar, the St. Paul of Mohammedanism, who was stayed, with his sword uplifted against his own sister in her own house, by hearing words of the Koran recited. He hastened, with his naked sword in his hand, to the house of the prophet, kissed his hand, and demanded to be taken into the fold of God. Omar was a tower of strength to the cause of Islam. After the death of Abu Bekr, he became the second and greatest of the califs.

But persecution against the prophet in this decade (610–620) was incessant. First the nobility of the Koreish, who had vested interests in the superstitious worship of the idols of the Kaaba, tried to prevail on their kinsman to stop his destructive campaign. They spoke to his uncle and protector Abu Talib, and the latter tried to reason with the prophet. For answer he heard from Mohammed, "Were the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left to bid me desist from my mission, I would not obey." "By Allah!" replied the generous protector, "I know not the truth of thy doctrines — but the men of Mecca shall not harm thee." When persuasion failed the Koreish appealed to more

forceful measures. They boycotted the entire families of Muttalib and Hashim and deposited in the Kaaba a formal and solemn ban against them. But Abu Talib rallied the excommunicated households about himself, and soon proved strong enough to bring the rest of the Koreish to a retraction of the nefarious edict. The parchment itself was found eaten by worms where it was hung. Nevertheless, part of Mohammed's followers found it advisable to seek more secure quarters, and a party of eleven men and four women, followed a few years later by eighty-two men and eighteen women, emigrated southward across the Red Sea to the Christian country of Abyssinia, where they were hospitably received.

When the death of Abu Talib removed the prophet's chief safeguard in Mecca, the persecution grew more fierce; and now Mohammed's very life was in danger. He left the city to carry his doctrine to the neighbouring town of Tayef; but he was there received with only derision and scorn. He left the town amid a shower of stones, at the imminent peril of his life. Mecca was hardly a safer place to return to.

Just at this crisis, in the year 620, there came in the pilgrimage to the holy Kaaba some men from Jathreb, later called Medina, a city

some two hundred miles northwest of Mecca. Jathreb (or Medina, as we may call it from now on) was far more open to new ideas than Mecca. It had a large Jewish population, and their expectation of the Messiah predisposed them, and their Arab fellow-townsmen, by association, to lend an ear to any new message. They heard Mohammed preach in Mecca, and were won by him. They begged him to come to Medina, offering him a large field of usefulness, and promising to worship Allah alone, to abstain from uncleanliness and the murder of infants, and to keep themselves from idol-worship. Mohammed first sent a pupil of his, Muss'ab, to preach to the people of Medina; then two years later, as further residence in Mecca became unbearable, fled himself with only one companion from the city of his birth, and after skulking three days in caves and shadows, reached Medina finally in safety, and was enthusiastically welcomed by the following Muss'ab had won for him. On the very night of his flight from Mecca, Mohammed had escaped murder only by the trick of leaving his son-in-law Ali in his own bed. Ali was not harmed however.

II

The flight to Medina, on the Hejira, took place in midsummer of the year 622, and from it the Mohammedan era is dated.

The Hejira marks a distinct epoch in the doctrine as well as in the life of the prophet. The period of Mohammed's activity in Medina is characterized by a totally different temper than the Meccan period. In the latter city the prophet was a persecuted preacher, fighting for the maintenance of his divine commission, and producing from his experience of courageous self-sacrifice the loftiest doctrines of confidence in God's care and responsibility toward God's commands. In Medina, on the other hand, he was from the first safe and welcome, and very soon supreme in the city, as Calvin was in Geneva in the days of the Reformation. In Mecca his lot was the task of St. Paul; in Medina it was the career of Constantine. In Mecca he was a Jeremiah, crying in the wilderness; in Medina he was a Gregory, ruling the Church.

The period of the Medina residence which comprised the last ten years of the prophet's life (622–632) is marked by two lines of simultaneous development: 1st, the warfare of the Moslems against the Koreish, which ended in

Mohammed's capture of Mecca in 630; and 2d, the gradual estrangement of the Moslems from the Jews in Medina, which ended in the expulsion from the city or the massacre of the latter. We could spend an hour on either of these subjects, the political fortunes, or the doctrinal induration, of Mohammedanism during the years 622–632; but we shall have to notice them only in their most salient features.

The first battle with the Koreish was fought less than two years after Mohammed's entrance into Medina, and was a complete victory for the little Moslem army. But already about the victory of Bedr appeared ominous signs of the debasement to worldly means and ends of the high doctrine of the Meccan prophet. The Moslems had won the battle by breaking the implicit truce of the holy Arab month. Their action was justified by a revelation to the prophet, containing the disastrous sentiment that want of orthodoxy is worse than want of humaneness. The equivocal victory was soon followed in the city by the first act of despotism on Mohammed's part; namely, the expulsion of the Kaninka Jews.

Blind champions of Islam have been at pains to minimize or gloss over these obvious lapses from the high character of the first announcements of the new religion. The Moslems were driven to grasp the sword against their will,

they say; or the Jews were removed from the city because they had broken their pledge of alliance with the prophet. But, even so, neither treachery in battle nor cruelty in punishment was justifiable; and Mohammed's *régime* in Medina must be charged with these faults when it broke the truce of Holy Month, and when it beheaded six hundred Jews in the market-place. It is still worse sophistry on the part of the extreme apologists for Islam to vindicate for the prophet the right of removal of individuals by speedy secret murder, on the ground that there was danger to the cause of his religion in sparing dangerous enemies for the uncertainty of judicial procedure. These methods of the stake and sword smack rather of the religion of the Inquisition than of the pure doctrine of an all-holy and almighty God in whose hands are all the ways of men.

After the victory at Bedr the Moslems suffered a severe defeat by the Koreish near Mt. Ohod, to the north of Medina. Mohammed, desperately wounded and long left for dead on the field in the midst of the enemy, was at last rescued by the bravery of his son-in-law Ali, and barely came through the awful day with his life. However, from the defeat at Mt. Ohod in 625 to the entrance of Mecca in 630, the arms of Mohammed were uninterruptedly victorious.

Besides his growing prestige in battle Mohammed was reaping the fruits of his remarkable endowment for administration in the consolidation of his absolute power in the city of Medina, and in the reputation of his name in the surrounding country, even to Syria.

On his arrival in Medina in 622, he had made some considerable concession to the Jews of that city. He had adopted some of their ritual, had turned the Kiblah (or holy index of the praying Moslem) toward Jerusalem, and had accepted the Jews in a close religious alliance. The estrangement, which began almost immediately to disturb this close friendship of the Jews and Arabs, was due to misunderstandings on both sides. Mohammed found that he was dealing with a people of old and sacred traditions, whose dogma had no elasticity, whose priests claimed a monopoly of spiritual knowledge, and whose Scriptures would by no means allow themselves to be "completed" by these new revelations of the Arab prophet. The Jews who, in the first appearance of the wonderful preacher of Mecca, may have thought they saw the promise of the Messiah, soon learned to discover the wide gulf that separates a new ideal in a man's soul from age-long ideas inherited in his nation's literature. Mohammed's religion, without a tradition and without a priesthood, could have little in com-

mon with the religion of the Jews, whose very life blood in the Eastern lands of the seventh century was in its sacred rolls and its sacred Rabbis. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, though it is to be deplored, that the breach between the Jews and the Moslems led to hatred, persecution, and bloodshed.

Some scholars have claimed that Mohammed borrowed a great deal of his religion from the Jews; but it seems to me they err here. Undoubtedly the comparatively large Jewish population in western Arabia was responsible for the dissemination both of Jewish legends and of Jewish doctrine through large parts of the country. Mohammed's dream, for example, of visiting the seventh heaven and there receiving instructions that the faithful should pray fifty times a day, which number he got reduced to five by successive importunities, is borrowed from the Jewish book of "Enoch"; and the quasi-monotheism existing even before Mohammed's day in the acknowledgment of the supreme God Allah, may have been inspired to an extent by the influence of the strict monotheistic Jews. But what is common property in a people's ideas, one man can be hardly said to "borrow." And I, therefore, believe it is misleading to say that Mohammed borrowed his monotheism from the Jews.

As regards the Christians, whose numbers were fewer, and whose zeal more feeble than the numbers and zeal of the Jews in Arabia, Mohammed can hardly be shown to have been influenced by them at all in his doctrine. If he paints the last judgment and the consequent pleasures of heaven and pains of hell in colours that suggest the Christian Apocalypse, on the other hand he knows so little of historic Christianity as to make Miriam, the sister of Moses, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, identical persons. After the Christian Church of the East had been wrangling four hundred years without ceasing over the natures of God and Christ, any man or child within travelling distance of Syria or Abyssinia (both Christian countries) might be fairly expected to know of the dogmas of the Trinity and the Incarnation. Mohammed denounces these dogmas as "intolerable blasphemies against the sole deity of Allah." At the same time he places Jesus second only to himself in the line of prophets sent by God to preach salvation to the world. He regards Jesus more than any of the others (Adam, Noah, Abraham, or Moses) as his predecessor and herald.

Besides building up his religious state power in Medina, and fighting the battles against the Koreish outside of Medina, Mohammed had innumerable cares and duties in these ten years as

arbiter of disputes, censor of morals, counsellor of the faithful, protector of widows and children. He united in his own person the offices of general, teacher, censor, judge, and father of his people. Nor were his responsibilities and ambitions confined to the land of Arabia alone. In the year 628, he sent solemn embassies to six kings and potentates of surrounding countries bidding them receive the new revelation as God's truth. The ruler of the great Persian kingdom, who styled himself King of Kings, indignant that the fugitive of Medina should dare to address him on equal terms, tore the message to shreds unread, and drove the envoy from his presence with insults. When the news of the incident was brought to Mahomet, he said only, "Thus shall the empire of the Persian be torn to shreds." Nine years after the prophet's death his words were fulfilled. The Persian Empire was shattered by Omar in the battle of Nehavend, "the Victory of Victories," and the grandson of the King of Kings, who had spurned Mohammed's message, wandered a fugitive and an outcast until the assassin's dagger put an end to his miserable existence.

Heraclius, the Greek emperor at Constantinople, treated the message and the messenger with more respect. He is even said to have followed up his gracious reply to the prophet by

summoning some Arab merchants sojourning in Gaza and catechising them on the new faith. "What are the doctrines of Mohammed?" he asked of Abu Safiân.—"He bids us abandon our ancient idols and adore one God; to bestow alms, to observe truth and purity, to abstain from uncleanliness and vice."—"And are his followers increasing or decreasing?"—"Nay," replied Abu Safiân, "his followers are increasing incessantly, and there is not one that has forsaken him."

Nothing came of Mohammed's embassies to the princes, however, except the wider advertisement of his religion.

The same year of the embassies (628), Mohammed resolved on a visit to the Kaaba in Mecca, the holy shrine which he had not seen since his flight from the city six years before. He took with him nearly a thousand armed followers, to prevent a sudden ambush or an open attack on the part of the still bitterly hostile Koreish. For motives hardly apparent, however, Mohammed, instead of entering the town by main force, agreed with the Koreish on a celebrated compact, by the terms of which he was to be allowed to enter the town the next year undisturbed, while the Koreish should retire voluntarily from the walls for three days. The other clauses in the treaty were that peace

should be established for ten years between the Moslems and the Koreish, and that either side should be at liberty to contract such alliances as it pleased. Thus the new religion was recognized as a power worthy to treat with by the proud and conservative Koreish, and the way was paved for Mohammed's peaceful introduction into the city which had driven him forth, six years before, an outcast with a price upon his head. Truly this man was of the stuff that heroes are made of!

Before Mohammed returned to Mecca in 629 to take advantage of the permission of the treaty to perform his devotions at the Kaaba, he carried on a campaign against the Jews of Chaibar, just to the north of Medina, which nearly cost him his life. Zaniab, a Jewish woman, set poisoned mutton before him. Mohammed had already tasted the meat when some circumstance roused his suspicion; according to the Moslem legend, the mutton itself spoke and warned the Prophet. A slave was given some of the meat to eat, and fell to the floor in his death agony. Mohammed had escaped with his life, but he never recovered from the poison that had entered his system. And four years later, when his end came, the fever was hastened by the poison in his blood.

Mohammed made his anticipated visit to

Mecca in 629. The Koreish, faithful to their word, left the city to a man, and for three days looked down from the surrounding heights on their detested fellow-countrymen worshipping in the town. At the end of the three days the Moslems, also as good as their word, quietly left the city.

But, evidently, Mohammed, the man convinced of the divine truth of his message, the absolute man, cast in the mould of uncompromising dogmatism, the man of victory after victory against foes without and foes within his adopted city, the master of minds and morals of his disciples — could not be content with a visit to Mecca. He was convinced that his religion was for his countrymen; that the only free and united Arabia would be a Moslem Arabia. His heart was made sick by the idols he saw again in the shrine of Allah, "painted boards on which ye rub oil and wax for the flies to stick to." His religion was only a sect and a schism so long as the holiest spot of his native land was shut against him and his followers. Mecca was to him what Jerusalem was to Josiah, the centre of a national religion. In the year following his short visit to Mecca, therefore, in 630, he moved against the city with a large army, despite the ten years' truce concluded a year before. The resistance offered by the Meccans was very

feeble. Mohammed marched into the city on the eleventh of January, 630, and from that day Mohammedanism became the national religion of the Arabs.

Nowhere in the annals of history is there a parallel to the magnificence of conduct shown by Mohammed in his victory over the Meccans. Only four persons in the entire city suffered death. Instead of turning the property of his enemies and persecutors over to his followers for boot and plunder, he gave orders that discipline should be maintained, property respected, and human life and honour spared. Only the idols, both those around the Kaaba (one for every day in the year) and those in private houses, were destroyed. Mohammed stood in the sacred enclosure of the shrine of Allah while the "abominations" were being cast out, and cried, "Truth has come, and falsehood vanisheth!" It was the moment of triumph in this great life of suffering, toil, martyrdom. The idea born in Mohammed's soul in the lonely night on the mountain, twenty years before, had won its way against the opposition of the inertia of ages of ignorance and the conservatism of centuries of idolatry—the idea which to-day, after the lapse of thirteen centuries, is still the guiding star of 175,000,000 of human lives.

III

In destroying the idols of the Kaaba and making Allah the only divinity of the Arabs, Mohammed by no means broke with all the religious past of his nation. Just as St. Paul incorporated the Jewish religion with the new Christian announcement of the kingdom of God, finding in Abraham the promise of Christ and in the Law the "schoolmaster" leading to Christ, so did Mohammed incorporate in his new sole worship of Allah the rites and observances of many generations of Arabs. Just what and whence the religious rites of Arabia were before Mohammed we now know, so far as scholarship can discover them, through the famous German Wellhausen's sketch entitled "Remnants of Arabian Heathenism." These rites or ceremonies are still observed on the occasion of pilgrimage to the Kaaba, as they were when first Mohammed himself, having exiled all heretics from the holy city of Mecca, instituted the perfect cult of Allah, in the year of the "Pilgrimage of Completion," the last year of his life (632). Though a non-Moslem enters with the pilgrimage to the Kaaba at the peril of instant death on detection, three Europeans in the nineteenth century have, nevertheless, relying on their command of the Arabic tongue and the completeness

of their disguise, ventured to join the holy train of pilgrims to the house of the Black Stone, and share in the sevenfold circuit of the shrine and the draught of water from the sacred well of Zem-Zem. The description of the rites by one of these three venturesome westerners, Captain R. F. Burton of the British Army, is of thrilling interest. The title of his book is, "A Pilgrimage to El-Medinah and Mecca."

In adopting the rites of the earlier heathendom and making the Kaaba the temple of Allah, Mohammed made the compromise which St. Paul made in amalgamating the Christian Gospel with the Jewish Scriptures, and which perhaps Jesus himself, had he lived to see the triumph of his religion as Mohammed did, would have been forced to make. A new idea does not come in its bare transcendency to fruition; it must sink into the life of humanity as a grain of corn is lost in the earth. It is a leaven and does its utmost when it has pervaded and transformed what was there for it to work upon. Goethe, "the universal mind," who has given us in lasting form the history of a human soul rescued through the purgatories of selfishness,— self-pride, self-disgust, self-indulgence, self-will, — planned, we are told by his biographer, Mr. Lewes, to make Mohammed the hero of a drama, in which the inevitable compromise between the high ideal and the

lower environment should be worked out. Such a work in Goethe's day, and from his master hand would have hastened the appreciation of the prophet of Islam which has been slowly maturing through the century just past, and would have been a corrective to that invidious sort of estimate which confuses dogmatic orthodoxy with greatness or purity of soul.

Mohammed cannot, to be sure, be spoken free of much that is lower than the highest spiritual excellence. As his power grew his ambition for the success of his cause and the unity of all his countrymen in the faith outran his earlier spiritual patience. As confidence in his revelations was established, he made use of that confidence to pronounce on matters that strictly have nothing to do with religion; in other words, he included the temporal matters of city government, family management, etc., under the head of his revelations. His zeal for the immediate triumph of Allah's cause led him to indulge in the persecution of exiles and even of executions. His consciousness of being the chosen prophet and mouthpiece of Allah tempted him, like his great reincarnation in modern history, Oliver Cromwell, to be terrible and relentless with the sword. He was not content, like the greater Teacher who went six hundred years before him, to sow his doctrine in the earth like a mustard seed, trusting

in God to bring the tree to growth. By as much as he thundered "my kingdom is of this world," by so much did he fall short of the faith of Jesus of Nazareth.

Yet there is a wondrous majesty in the force of character, conviction, and conquest of this son of the Arabian desert; an elemental strength which compels our admiration and almost our consent. A man who was only first a herdsman, then a trader, then a persecuted fanatic, in ten years built up a kingdom which less than a century afterwards should be stronger than the millennial kingdom of Rome; his doctrine, limited to a handful of relatives and neighbours in the year 622, became in 632 the faith of his nation, and before the close of the century, had planted its emblems on the watch-towers of the faithful from Delhi in India to Granada in Spain! And not only so, but even now, after a lapse of nearly thirteen centuries, continues to count its adherents by the hundreds of millions. All other great religions have had to wait years, perhaps centuries, for the champion who made them a power in politics and in the nation. The legislation of Moses had to wait for its captain, Joshua; the doctrine of the Buddha for its emperor, Asoka; the tenets of Zoroaster were spread by the arms of Darius the Persian; and the religion of Jesus endured three centuries of persecution before

Constantine made Christianity the faith of the Roman Empire. But the inception, the persecution, the triumph of Islam came all in that short period of Mohammed's life which fell between the years 610 and 630. A religion born and grown to maturity and established in triumph in a score of years! The world has no other miracle to match this.

We should remember this precipitancy of development in judging the religion of Mohammed. It will make us more tolerant of the dogmas that hardened under that tremendous pressure of inordinate success. We should remember, too, when tempted to measure Mohammed's character by standards of modern western civilization, what was the actual condition of the Arabia of his day. It was an age and a land in which pride and might were exalted, and justice and humility decried — where a man struck down his neighbour or even his brother at his sovereign's command; where woman was the ward of the man who could protect her; where the victors in war tore out the hearts of their dead enemies, and the women strung the ears and noses of their mutilated corpses in horrid necklaces; where the victorious captain bade his men bury their dead without washing the blood from their bodies, because "it would smell sweet as musk in paradise." "When God makes the prophet He does

not unmake the man." Mohammed was an Arab, and the Arab appealed not to logic or to synods for the settlement of convictions, but to the blade. His principle was that of Robespierre, that the preservation of virtue is guaranteed by terror; his speculative genius went hardly further than the curt syllogism of Omar's regarding the treatment of the libraries of the Syrians and the Greeks: "Either the books contain what is in the *Koran* or they do not; in the first case they are superfluous, in the second mischievous." So the most valuable treasures antiquity had to give us were ruthlessly sacrificed to Arab puritanism.

The cause and doctrine, however, in behalf of which this puritanism was exercised, must be confessed to be an immense advance over the pre-Islamic faith of Arabia; the latter was idolatrous, the former acknowledged only one God. And this one God of Islam, called on every page of the "Koran" "The Merciful and Compassionate," was able to unite all men and all races to whom he came in those first years of triumph, in a faith of simple and lofty adoration and implicit surrender. There was no priesthood, no mythology, no monastic asceticism, no esoteric philosophy in the new religion; no miracles even, except one. That was the descent of the "Koran" from heaven.

IV

The "Koran" (literally, "reading") is the Bible of the Moslems. It consists of a number of "Suras," or "courses," arranged helter-skelter like the "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius. Only these Suras, instead of being the quiet thoughts of a philosopher, claim to be the direct revelations of God Almighty. Some of the Suras are terse, noble, and inspired; they are the early revelations of the Meccan days. Others are diffuse and filled with Jewish and Christian legend and polemics. Still others are trivial and arbitrary, betraying the autocrat rather than the prophet. Omar, the second caliph (634–644), urged the collection of the revelations of the "Koran" as a holy instrument against false prophets. As the years passed, the sacredness of the book grew, until it was exalted into an idol, and the commentaries on it began to assume an authority parallel to the Jewish Talmud or the Christian Fathers. There are mosques to-day in which the whole "Koran" (a book about the size of the New Testament) is read through aloud in one day, thirty priests taking up the reading in relays; and there are Moslem doctors who claim to have read their Scriptures through ten thousand times. Nöldeke estimates that the "Koran" is far and

away the most widely read book in existence to-day.

The doctrine of the "Koran" is not so consistently pure and lofty as that of the New Testament or even the Buddhistic Scriptures. One feels the intensity, impatience, intolerance of it. It is the doctrine of a militant realism; for Mohammed's mission to a people blinded with idolatry and superstition was to restore reality to life, the reality of this world and the next. Hence the real and even the fleshy joys of heaven and pains of hell. But they err greatly who see only grossness in Mohammed's revelations. We could quote page after page of high ethical counsel and deep spiritual yearnings. The "Koran" has its Lord's prayer and its penitential Psalms, its hymns of praise and its Sermons on the Mount: "Judge between men with truth and follow not thy passions lest they cause thee to err from the way of God." "Covet not another's gifts from God." "There is no piety in turning the face east or west, but in believing in God only and doing good." "Make the best of all things; enjoin justice and avoid the foolish; and if satan stir thee to evil, take refuge in God." "Touch not the goods of orphans." "Reform your covenant, and walk not proudly on the earth."

V

We have called Mohammed "the Revivalist of Semitism"; that is, because he was a prophet again with a prophet's cry from the desert, in an age when Israel had forgotten her Jeremiah and Christianity its St. Paul. His message was Semitic to the core; a call to his nation to return to its God; a word direct from the Most High by the mouth of his chosen servant. Here was conviction again, vitality, reality! a real heaven and a real hell; a real God and his real world; a real religion and a real piety "that was not in turning the face east or west." Here was a real man again: —

> "The monarch mind, the mystery of commanding,
> The birth-hour gift, the art Napoleon
> Of wielding, moulding, gathering, welding, banding
> The hearts of thousands till they beat as one."

"It almost seemed as if the fierce, clear, Semitic spirit, which had created through much tribulation the monotheism of Israel, had with one great effort reincarnated itself in the kindred people of the desert, and blazed forth again in Mohammed the son of Abdullah." With him the prostrate East raised its head. Science, letters, medicine, philosophy, followed in the courts of his successors, the Abbaside caliphs

of the eighth to the tenth centuries. From them we have the novel and the love-song, algebra and the decimal system. Under the influence of their successors in Spain, the Christians of the West began again to study in the eleventh century where they had left off in the fifth. So the torch of learning was passed from the Moslem philosophers of the Mesopotamian Valley to their brethren in Cordova and Granada by the western seas; and from them again, across the Pyrenees, came the new study of Aristotle, the impetus to the philosophy of the Schoolmen, which itself ended in the rationalism of Descartes and the birth of the modern thought.

CHAPTER IX

MARTIN LUTHER, AND THE DAWN OF THE MODERN AGE

"His breast was the battle-field of two ages: small wonder that saw demons." — *German Poem.*

"The Church has no authority except for the world's betterment." — *Luther to the German Nobles.*

On that October morning of 1492 when Columbus sighted the shores of a new world, there sat a pale-faced, and probably quite dirty-faced, peasant boy, with bright eyes and a solid brow, on his bench in the public school of the little Saxon mining town of Mansfeld. He was not yet quite nine years old, and his thoughts, so far as they strayed from the primer or the multiplication-table under his eyes, were very likely busy with the tales of good fairies or devils' imps which his imaginative mother had woven into the legends of St. George, the "earth-tiller," or St. Anna, protectress of the mountain workers. For Hans Luther, the miner, and his wife Margaret were pious people, who

brought up their son Martin in the fear of the Virgin and the saints, and who beat him roundly with a stout stick when he committed such heinous crimes as stealing a handful of nuts. "They meant it all for my best good," said this much-exercised son, years later, when he was the foremost man in Germany; but he did not treat his boys so. However, the marks of the rod were not deep enough to disfigure the boy Luther; and posterity owes an insolvable debt of gratitude to the hard-handed, hard-headed peasant, Hans Luther, who cared enough for the future of his son to make the sacrifice necessary to spare him from home and send him first to schools in Magdeburg and Eisenach, and later to the very reputable University of Erfurt.

I

The Germany in which Martin Luther was making his studies in the latter years of the fifteenth century was a pitiable land. Politically it was still paying the costs of Charlemagne's spectacular coronation as Emperor of the new Roman Empire on Christmas Day of the year 800 in Rome; that is to say, the rulers of Germany were not the actual, national sovereigns of a united country, as were the rulers of France and England at this time, but they were the fictitious heads of a fictitious state — the Holy

Roman Empire, which, one recalls, was so aptly defined by Voltaire as being neither "holy," nor "Roman," nor an "empire." Germany, for these rulers, who might themselves be Englishmen or Spaniards, was only a huge farm from which to reap revenues for fighting dynastic wars. Even the dashing Maximilian, the last of the emperor knights, and German to the core, spent most of his time while in his German lands trying to coax or bully the Diet into furnishing him money to raise armies to discomfort the Bourbons and exalt the Hapsburgs. As for the princes of the empire, electoral, ecclesiastical, and lay, some were for Max, some for the Pope, some for the Bourbons, all for themselves, and none for a common Fatherland.

The social condition of Germany at the close of the fifteenth century was more chaotic, if possible, than the political condition. All those social forces which were finally to break the monotonous, age-long domination of the mediæval Roman Church, were at hand — only the land was not yet conscious of their united strength. The chief of these forces were: 1st, industrial independence with the consequent emergence of a rich *bourgeoisie*, or middle class, opposed on the one hand to the nobility and the clergy, and on the other hand to the downtrodden peasantry; 2d, the new learning, fos-

tered first by the Mohammedan science of Spain, then by the revival of the classic models of ancient Greece; 3d, the spirit of adventure and exploration by sea with the consequent widening of commercial interests and the rise of large cities as trade centres. In a word, that ideal of the solidarity of human nature, which finally fought its way to victory in the French Revolution, first seriously declared its power in the industrial activities, the educational reforms, and the peasants' revolts of the closing fifteenth century.

If we were studying the life of Erasmus or Von Hutten in this essay, we should dwell longer on the new learning and the social agitations of this period; but Luther's work was primarily a religious work, and it is consequently in the religious conditions of the Germany of the closing fifteenth century that we find the presage of reform most clear and unmistakable. Let us glance rapidly at those conditions.

In the first place, there never was a distinctively German Christianity, as there was a Jewish, and a Greek, and a Latin Christianity. When the barbarians were converted to the faith of Christ, they were converted to the Church of Rome, that mighty structure which was complete in theory, at least, with St. Augustine three hundred years before the labours of the

missionary apostle Boniface in the German forests. Therefore the Germanic nations had no conception of a Christianity without Rome for its capital and the Pope for its sacred head. A full third of German territory in Luther's day actually belonged to magnates of the Roman Church, in bishoprics and monastic foundations; and it was the plaint of Kaiser Max that the Pope and priests got one hundred times the income that he got himself from his own Germany. As for the common man — and a nation, we must remember, is composed largely of the common man — the priest, representing the mysterious, all-powerful Church, was clothed for him with the majesty and awe of a judge. In the priests' hands were the sacred sacraments whose enjoyment would help his soul on toward heaven, but whose denial would leave him forever an outcast to burn in hell. So in the priests' hands were the souls of his wife and children. The whole theory of the mediæval priesthood is summed up in Luther's story of his own experience while a schoolboy in Magdeburg. There he saw in a church for an altarpiece the painting of a ship "wherein was no layman, not even a prince or a king; there was none but the Pope with his cardinals and bishops at the prow, with the Holy Ghost hovering over them, while priests and monks were at the sides with their

oars; thus they went sailing heavenward. The laymen were swimming along in the water around the ship. Some of them were drowning, some were pulling themselves up to the ship by ropes which the monks, moved by pity, threw out to them. And there was no cardinal, nor bishop, nor monk, nor priest in the water, but laymen only." The picture made a powerful impression on Luther's receptive mind. Seven years later, he himself entered the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt.

We are warned by scholars, in our enthusiasm for the work of Luther and his followers, not to forget that this mediæval absolution of the papacy had been questioned and even assailed both in its dogmas and its hierarchy long years before Luther was born. Dr. Weber, the historian of philosophy, says, for example: "They who endeavour to trace all modern negations to the Reformation ignore, or affect to ignore, the fact that in the ninth century Scotus Erigena denied eternal punishment; that in the twelfth century Abelard declared the teachings of the Greeks to be superior to the Old Testament; that in the thirteenth century scores of Catholics refused to believe in the miraculous conception of the Virgin and the resurrection of Christ; that two hundred years before the Reformation, when the Holy See was at its height of power, St. Thomas

and Duns Scotus found themselves obliged to prove with all arts of logic the need of a revelation and the credibility of Scripture." And M. Taine, the great French critic, writes in the same vein: "One hundred and thirty years before Luther they said that the Pope was not established by Christ, that pilgrimages and image-worship were akin to idolatry, that external rites were of no importance, that priests ought not to possess temporal wealth, and that the confessional has not power of absolving from sin." Undoubtedly these statements of Weber and Taine are true; but who and how many were these advanced souls that protested against the abuses of the mediæval Church? "Scores of Catholics," says Weber, and justly; but what are scores of Catholics to the population of Europe! Undoubtedly, Arnold of Brescia was put to death in the twelfth century for criticising the tyranny of the Roman court; and Wiclif in England, "130 years before Luther," was doubting the doctrine of Transubstantiation; and Hus was burned at Constance, in 1415, for his "evangelical" sermons in the Bethlehem Chapel at Prague; and Savonarola, before the Signoria in Florence, for lashing the sins of the Roman hierachy, was hung on the gallows one May morning in 1498 — perhaps the same morning that Luther, before the altar in Magdeburg,

was shuddering at the painting of the ship "wherein was no layman, not even king or prince."

But we are in far greater danger of exaggerating the extent of the reform movements before the Reformation, than we are of underrating them. One brave spirit in England, Bohemia, or Tuscany stood out for spiritual freedom, and a few followed him; a little sect, easy for a usurping king or a papal lord to stamp out with a company of dragoons, or to drive to the mountains with sword and torch. The *people* were not for Wiclif or Savonarola, but they were for Luther. The same class of rough peasants that stood jeering Hus in the flames at Constance cried "Amen!" to Martin Luther's bold defiance of the emperor and the Pope at Worms. When Savonarola's charred bones were cleared from the scaffold in front of the Signoria, a few wept over him in dangerous silence; but when it was rumoured that harm from the Pope's men had overtaken Luther on his way home from the audience with Emperor Charles, a quiver of indignation ran through Germany, from the Baltic to the Swiss Lakes. "Nine-tenths of the people of the land are crying '*Luther!*'" wrote Aleander, the papal legate, to his superior in the Vatican.

Not that this detracts one iota from the glory

of those lonely saints who suffered martyrdom for a cause not yet ripe. The fewer their helpers the greater their merit! Without them the greater one who followed would not have been "made perfect." But before the man could speak whose word should kindle the land into flame, those forces which were at work to overthrow the absolute tyranny of the Middle Ages had to be active, not in little sects and brotherhoods, but in large circles of society. The new learning had to open the possibility of historical study and Scripture criticism; the new universities had to introduce the leaven of the Renaissance into the old lump of scholastic philosophy; the democratic religious societies, like the Third Order of the Franciscans, the Brothers of the Common Life, and the Lollards, these powerful bonds between monastic and lay Christianity, had to prepare the moral reformation of Europe by sowing broadcast their stern ideas of penance, prayer, and self-denial; and, above all, the debased Roman court had to fill up the measure of its dignity by flouting the demands of pious Catholics for "reform of the Church in head and branches," and returning, after the illusory councils of Pisa, Constance, and Basel, to the frivolity and recklessness of the popes of the quattrocento — the "heathen popes," as history has called them.

The elasticity of the Roman Church seemed at last to have reached its limit. She had absorbed in her mighty scheme of world rule each successive phase of national genius or social revolt or religious reform — the heathenism of the Odin-worshippers, the feudalism of the great barons, and the Minorite Orders of St. Francis of Assisi. But this new reform movement was too loud in its demands — purification of the Church in its head and branches. Through fear, or laziness, or luxury, or all together, Rome refused the summons. For the first and only time in history she ignored the cry of her own children; and heaven soon sent the man to chastise her for her faithlessness.

I would not by these words wish to convey the idea that Martin Luther stepped out into public notice as an assailant of the Roman Church. Nothing could be further from the truth. He loved the Roman Church; he was a monk in its communion; he revered its saints and the mystery of its sacraments. When he nailed his ninety-five theses on penance and forgiveness to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, he believed he was defending, not attacking, the Catholic faith; that he was an ally, not an enemy, of the Pope. In confidence he wrote to his friend Spalatin then, "I am awaiting the decision of Christ from the Roman

See." Leo X was still Christ's mouthpiece for Luther in 1517, as the Apostle Peter was in the days of Nero. It was only after two years of progressive disillusionment that Luther finally realized the hopelessness of the compromise of the papal Church with the spirit of Machiavelli and the Medicis; and then he nobly took upon his own shoulders, unaided, the work of reform which that Church refused to do. And then he joined the company of the world's heroes.

II

But we anticipate. Twenty years intervened between the day when Luther stood shuddering before the painted ship over the altar in the church at Magdeburg, and the day he nailed the ninety-five theses to the church portal in Wittenberg; and they were the years in which he proved the truth of the saying of the Chinese sage, Mencius: "When Heaven is about to confer some great office on a man, it first tries his mind with suffering and his sinews with toil."

The years at the University of Erfurt were spent in faithful study along the lines of traditional mediæval culture, — logic, philosophy, rhetoric, dialectics, etc. Yet Luther found time, in the midst of his work, to cultivate the imaginative traits of character which he had inherited from his mother, and to contract wide associa-

tions of good-fellowship with his college mates. His nicknames of "Philosophus" and "Musicus" indicate his tastes while at college. When he won his Master's degree with high honours in 1505, his classmates conducted him home with a torchlight procession. It was the ambition of the elder Luther to have young master Martin continue his studies in the faculty of jurisprudence, but to the surprise and disappointment of many interested persons besides his father, Luther suddenly took the resolve, and kept it, of entering the Augustinian Monastery at Erfurt. Tradition says that the death of a much-loved companion worked upon the impressionable mind of the young student, resulting in so vivid a realization of the transitoriness and precariousness of the goods and honours of this world, that in a moment of fright on being overtaken by a severe thunderstorm, Luther cried out, "Help me, St. Anna, and I will become a monk!"

In the cloister Luther continued his studies, practising all the while the most vigorous exercises of asceticism and mortification. "If ever a monk could get to heaven by monkish performances, I should have got there so," he wrote later. His was the sort of nature that enters unreservedly into the fulfilment of its duty. Conviction for him was a summons to do, to act, to outdo all around him. The prior of the

monastery advised him to use moderation in his fasts and vigils; but the vicar of the Order, Dr. Staupitz, wisely solved the problem of his overstrung nature by providing an outlet for it in more work. Frederick, Elector of Saxony, had founded a new University (in 1502) at Wittenberg, his residence town. Thither Luther was called in 1508, by recommendation of Staupitz, as professor of philosophy. The atmosphere of Wittenberg, with its ambitious little university, its unspoiled seclusion on the edge of the Brandenberg lowlands, and its generous and broad-minded patron and prince, the Elector Frederick the Wise, was far more congenial to an active mind of Luther's type than the atmosphere of the Erfurt cloister. At Wittenberg he taught, and preached, and performed his monastic duties all at once. His fine genius, given scope to unfold, began to make for him friends and fame. His lectures were enthusiastically attended, and the favour of Prince Frederick, who proved later to be Luther's protector and saviour, was won.

Luther had been teaching and preaching nine years at Wittenberg when his controversy with Tetzel, seller of indulgences, came about. During those nine years two significant facts in his life may be noted. In 1511 he paid a visit to Rome, on an errand for his Order. At Rome he

saw the corruption of the papal court, and mourned over the indifference of the clergy to spiritual things. On his return to Wittenberg he became a Doctor of the Church, and transferred his professional labours at the University from the philosophical to the theological faculty. Galatians, Romans, and St. John were his favourite subjects for courses in scriptural exegesis; and as he studied more and more deeply in the New Testament, he became more and more imbued with the spirit of St. Paul. In the monastery at Erfurt he had (for the first time in his life) looked into a Bible, and he was disposed to study it, as he was everything that came under his eyes. But his teacher, Usinger, had dissuaded him, saying, "Ah, Brother Martin, what is the Bible, anyway? The Fathers have drawn all the sap from the Bible; study them. The Bible only stirs up all sorts of strife." Now, however, Luther was lecturing regularly on the Bible, both the Old Testament and the New. And in this close study of the sources of Christianity he was beginning to discover, as St. Francis, and Wiclif, and Hus, and Savonarola before him had partly discovered, the great discrepancy between the Gospel as taught by Jesus and St. Paul, and the Gospel as taught by the priests of Leo X.

Now this same Pope Leo X, who was an artis-

tic pagan of the famous Medici family, was badly in need of money. In 1506 the foundations of the Church of St. Peter had been laid on the right bank of the Tiber, and this finest temple in all Christendom was to be built with the donation from Europe north of the Alps. Italy had already been squeezed almost dry. The Pope sold honours to the prelates, and the prelates collected the pay from the people. In this way, Albert, Electoral Archbishop of Mainz, who had run into debt for thirty thousand guldens to pay Leo for his consecration collar of lambs' wool, had his agent Tetzel on the road in northern Germany, collecting the sum through the infamous sale of certificates of pardon, on which the profit was of course the selling price.

These certificates are commonly known as "Indulgences," but the word contains a gross misrepresentation of the facts of the case. It was not the permission to sin in the future that Tetzel sold, but the forgiveness of sins in the past. But at any rate it was an entire confusion of values, this changing pardon for silver coins; and an outrage to the finer religious sensibilities. It had grown out of a long-established custom with the Roman court and Pope of granting special favour, in the shape of offices or the promise of heaven's grace, to persons who made special sacrifices for the Church — such as going

on the Crusades and the like. Then gradually these sacrifices had come to be more and more of a pecuniary nature, until the dangerous precedent of confounding spiritual values with material values had ended in the downright barter of forgiveness for money.

Luther was imbued with the spirit of St. Paul, who did not confuse spiritual and material values. From St. Paul he had learned that pardon is God's to give freely, not the Pope's to sell for a price. He forbade his parishioners to patronize the pardon-sales of Tetzel, who, not being allowed in the elector's land, had established himself just across the border, and a few miles only from Wittenberg, at Jüterbock. Many of the Wittenberg congregation, however, joined the stream of pilgrims to Jüterbock, and heard the preaching under the red banner emblazoned with Leo's arms,—how that souls sprang out of purgatory as soon as the coin rattled in the collection box; and how that Leo's red banner was more potent than the cross of Christ itself, and could even empty all purgatory of sin-stained souls. Luther warned privately, and preached publicly, against the traffic, and when it only increased the more for that, he resorted to the method then in vogue of enlisting public opinion in any cause. He prepared a list of ninety-five sentences or theses against the selling of pardons,

and invited discussion on the same by posting them in a public place. With no press, no public meeting, and no popular representation in the governing council of the land, the only method of protest against any act or doctrine of the established tyranny of State and Church was appeal to the arms of revolution or invitation to a university disputation. And the latter was the weapon most feared by the tyrants.

Nobody appeared to discuss publicly the theses which the zealous Professor Luther had posted on the door of the Castle Church on the last day of October, 1517; but the public were soon interested in them, nevertheless, and they called out protests from Tetzel himself and other champions of the doctrine of negotiable pardon. Luther was ready with replies on his side, and so the matter resolved itself into a battle of pamphleteers. The Pope, at first indifferently annoyed at being disturbed in his humanistic studies by this quarrel of monks, was, in a little while, enough persuaded of the seriousness of the matter to summon Luther to Rome to answer for his despite of the holy practices of the Church. The Elector Frederick, knowing the bitterness with which Luther's theses had been combated, was apprehensive of danger to his brilliant professor in the close vicinity of the papal court, and so at his insistence, the Pope arranged to

have Luther meet the legate Cajetan, at Augsburg, in Bavaria. Luther went to Augsburg, but was so haughtily and summarily treated by Cajetan, the uncompromising papal aristocrat, that he left the city secretly and returned to Wittenberg. This was in October of 1518, just a year after the posting of the theses. At the beginning of the next year (January 6,1519) Leo sent the Saxon Von Miltitz to carry a papal decoration to the Elector Frederick. Miltitz, a fellow-countryman of Luther's, and a man of mild manner, succeeded better than Cajetan in allaying (or, perhaps we should say, in delaying) the strife between Luther and the Church. He appealed to Luther, with tears and protestations, not to bring schism and enmity into the Church of Christ — the holy, indivisible, eternal Church. Miltitz left Altenberg, where their conference was held, with the promise from Luther that so long as his opponents kept their peace, he would do the same. With Miltitz's departure from Altenberg, closes the prelude of the Reformation. The tragedy itself was to commence six months later with the famous disputation at Leipzig.

That Luther, during these months between the posting of the theses (October 31, 1517) and the interview with Miltitz (January 6, 1519), so far from regarding himself as an adversary, regarded himself as a true son of the Church is abundantly

evident from his correspondence. We have seen earlier in the essay how he waited the Pope's judgment as the word of Christ on the subject of the pardons. When he was deceived in his expectation of an ally in St. Peter's, he still found it impossible to believe that the Pope, if he understood his position fully, could fail to sympathize with him. So after the disappointing episode with Cajetan at Augsburg he wrote to Rome, appealing "from the Pope poorly informed to the Pope to be better informed." He wrote again early in 1519, and still again, in the fall of the next year, after the battle had been opened in earnest between the pardon-sellers and the "Lutherans"; and invariably his tone was one of profound reverence and faithful obedience and devotion to the supreme head of Christendom. Later Luther found reason to call the Pope *Antichrist* and *Devil;* but he began his reform of the Church as a zealous preacher and monk, a worshipper of the Virgin, and a devout child of the Holy Father at Rome. And he would probably have continued and ended his reform as such a man, had the Church been willing in his day to *be* reformed. "I may err," wrote Luther, in the midst of the pamphleteering over the theses, "but nobody can call me a heretic."

The crisis in Luther's life, the moment, we may say, in which he became a Protestant, came in the

summer of 1519. A certain Dr. Eck of Ingolstadt, who had already attacked the doctrine of the theses, challenged a colleague of Luther's to a public disputation on grace and free-will. Duke George of Saxony offered the disputants his hall at the Pleissenburg in Leipzig. Eck soon left the topic of debate, and broke the truce arranged between Miltitz and Luther at Altenburg by attacking the latter's doctrine of the Pope's inability to forgive sins. Luther took up the challenge, and disputed for five days with Eck, in the presence of Duke George and his court, on the supremacy of the Pope over the Catholic Church. It was a battle of giants. Little by little Luther developed the line of thought he had set forth in the theses; step by step he was forced to avow that the Church was more than the visible hierarchy culminating in the Roman throne. He felt the Spirit moving in Church quite free and independent of the consecrated priest. The believer was a priest, too, by his faith. God anointed him. He was what he was by the grace of God, the grace by which St. Paul was an apostle. This was unheard-of boldness—the heresy of the Waldenses and Wiclifites and Hussites over again. Eck caught the opportunity. He accused Luther of favouring the Bohemian heresy of John Hus, the man whose name was a byword for reproach in the papal

Church. Amid intense excitement Luther calmly met the charge: "Nay, dear Doctor," said he, "the Hussite opinions are not all wrong." "God help us, the pestilence," cried Duke George, so loudly that all in the hall heard him, "and he wagged his head and dug his fists into his sides." The dispute was ended. Eck had declared his antagonist a publican and a heathen, and Luther stood, self-confessed, before the papal world, a party to the doctrines of John Hus. The Protestant Reformation was begun!

III

Immediately all Germany began to take sides for or against this bold Wittenberger professor who had dared again to stir the hornet's nest of the Roman Curia; and those parties began to form, whose civil wars devastated the Fatherland in the seventeenth century and which still divide the Germans of Prussia from the Germans of Bavaria. Eck and his followers rejoiced that Luther had at last been amply convicted of heresy, and waited anxiously the inevitable bull of excommunication from Rome. The clergy generally saw in him another renegade priest from whose contamination they must keep their skirts clean. But the free spirit of Germany, touched with the new humanism of the Renaissance, and tired of the domination of a foreign

clergy, cried, "All-hail!" to the new champion of German freedom. Franz von Sickingen greeted him for the knights, who hated the encroachments of the bishops; the Bohemian heretics greeted him for his defiance of the Pope; Erasmus greeted him for the scholars, who hated superstition and obscurantism; the students greeted him for his sturdy bravery; the princes for his sterling patriotism. "To your tents, O Israel!" cried Hutten, the poet whom Emperor Max had crowned "laureate," — the same Hutten who two years before, when Luther and Tetzel were quarrelling, had hoped "the two snarling monks would tear each other to pieces, and good riddance to both."

Meanwhile the effect of the Leipzig disputation on Luther himself was marvellous. He came to a sense of his own fundamental disagreement with the whole mediæval system of religion. He found in it ceremonies in the place of faith, thirst for power and wealth in the place of eagerness for service, and blind obedience to authority in the place of one's own conviction of truth. It was as if the grave clothes of mediævalism that had bound his soul, too, were loosed with this public confession at Leipzig, and his soul was stimulated with the sense of freedom. Works came in great number from his pen in the years 1519 and 1520, among them the three

classics of the Protestant Reformation; namely, "The Address to the German Nobility," "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church," and "On the Freedom of a Christian Man." I am indebted to Dr. Lindslay of Glasgow, the latest biographer of Luther, for the following figures, which show the incredible literary activity of the Reformer in the years immediately following the disputation at Leipzig. "In 1517 only 37 books had been issued from German presses. In 1519 the total number of German publications was 111 of which 50 were Luther's, and in 1520 the number rose to 208, of which 133 were Luther's. Of all Luther's works the most powerful in influence on the German people was the "Address to the Nobility," published in August, 1520. Over 4000 copies were sold in a fortnight. The pamphlet may be called the manifesto of the Protestant Reformation. Intense patriotism and the soundest good sense pervade this fervid appeal to the nobles to stand for a united fatherland and a German Church against the extortionate tyranny of the papal court. The sanctity of the real relationships of life, home, family, school, trade, profession, is emphasized against the artificial sanctity of the ascetic, pessimistic, world-despising, yet self-indulgent holiness of the Church. Luther would do away with the mendicant monks, who only encouraged

laziness and beggary; he would abolish the holy feast days, which were only an occasion for drunkenness and revelry; he would have the priests respectably married; he would have the extravagant pilgrimages to holy shrines checked: they only filled the land with vagrant beggars; he would have the monastic vows done away with, and leave monk and nun to enter or leave the convents as they pleased; he would have the payment of taxes to Rome stopped, and the finances of the German people administered for the development of the German lands; he would have the schools reformed, the clergy reduced and set to work, the industries of the country encouraged by protection, and the supremacy of the Pope in the government of State utterly abolished — a rather modern programme to come from the pen and brain of a slate-cutter's son whose boyhood and youth were passed under the full influence of the mediæval system! Had Luther never nailed his theses to the door of the Church in Wittenberg, had he never faced the emperor at Worms, had he never laid the foundations of the modern German language by his wonderful translation of the Bible, had he never written another word or preached another sermon, his "Address to the Nobility," would alone earn him the title of one of Germany's greatest heroes and benefactors, and one

of the clearest-sighted prophets of the modern age.

The papal bull of excommunication was duly forthcoming. The triumphant Eck seems to have been its author, and he with Aleander received the commission of enforcing it in Germany. The bull was published in September, 1520, a month after Luther's stirring "Address to the German Nobility" had gone from the press. Germany was fairly challenged to take sides with Luther or Leo. That there might not be halting now, Luther, accompanied by a band of faithful friends and students, took the bull out to the Elster Gate in Wittenberg on the morning of the 10th of December, 1520, and threw it on a bonfire. The measure of Luther's iniquity in the eyes of the papal court was full; he had defied and insulted the supreme pontiff of Christendom. He had resisted threats, entreaties, counsels, and even the final rebuke of excommunication. Nothing was left for Rome but an appeal to the secular arm to rid the world of this hardened heretic. The Pope delivered the accursed man into the hands of the emperor for judgment and punishment.

IV

It must be reckoned as perhaps the most unfortunate fact in the whole history of Germany

that the emperor who was chosen by the electors to succeed Maximilian, in the very days of the Leipzig Disputation (June 1519), was a bigoted Spanish Catholic, without a spark of sympathy or even comprehension for Luther's programme of a German State as laid down in the "Address to the Nobility"; and even without knowledge of the German tongue itself, if we except the dialect of the Netherlands, where he was born. Charles V, grandson of Maximilian I of the House of Hapsburg and Mary of Burgundy, son of crazy Joanna, heiress of Castile, had, laid in his cradle, the kingdoms of Austria, Spain, the Netherlands, Naples, and the Sicilies, and the newly discovered lands of America. His rival in the canvass for the imperial crown of the Holy Roman Empire was the genial Francis I of France. Even Henry VIII of England had cherished ambitions to succeed Maximilian. So low was the ebb of national pride in Germany, that the supreme dignity of the land was contended for by a Spaniard, an Englishman, and a Frenchman. Charles was but twenty years old when he came up the Rhine to hold his first diet on German ground in the little town of Worms. He summoned Luther to appear before him there and answer for his conduct. Luther travelled by carriage from Wittenberg to Worms (a journey of some 250 miles) and was hailed all

ng the route as the champion of German dom. The memory of this ovation must have engthened Luther when he stood a few days later before the emperor and the princes of the realm, and was solemnly adjured to answer for his faith. It was the second day of the audience, the 18th of April, 1521. For two hours Luther had been arguing his case before a bench of jurors, whose decision was reached before he had begun. He was asked to repeat his plea in Latin for the benefit of the emperor. This he did. Then the temporizing and the nagging began again. They asked him for an answer "without horns," whether he would retract what he had said about the Pope and the councils. Luther's endurance was nearly at an end. "Since your Imperial Majesty wants a plain answer, I will give one without horns and teeth, and in this fashion. I believe neither in Pope nor councils alone, since it is clear as day that they have frequently erred and also contradicted themselves. . . . I am bound by the Scripture which I have quoted. . . . My conscience is held by these words of God. I cannot and I will not recant, for to act against one's conscience is neither honourable nor safe. Here I take my stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen!" Brave words and bravely spoken, by the monk of Wittenberg to the emperor of half

the civilized world! But Charles V could not understand them. He had inherited his religion like his lands, and it was neither a question of conscience nor a question of Scripture with him, but only a question of the Church as it was and had been as far back as his grasp of history reached. Besides, Charles's eyes were not on Luther; they looked past him over the Alps, to see what the Pope would say, and whether the Pope would join him in his wars with France if he removed this troublesome priest for the Pope's sake. "Fool of fools" Napoleon called this young potentate, for not seeing and seizing the chance at Worms to put himself at the head of a real German nation, united by the lasting sentiment of patriotism. But it was not so much Charles's folly as his training that closed his eyes to the tremendous significance of his choice at Worms. He chose as the Catholic Spaniard and bigot would be expected to choose; he preferred to lean on the broken reed of the Pope's promise with piety, than to trust the sturdy staff of Teuton oak which Luther offered him. He declared Luther an outlaw, and left the uncongenial soil of Germany to plunge into a series of wars with his rival of France. The favour of the Pope, which he had won by the edict of Worms, lasted just five years.

We have not time in this hour to follow in

detail Luther's life from the momentous day of Worms in 1521 to his death, twenty-five years later. That quarter of a century was spent in preaching and teaching at Wittenberg under the faithful protection of the electors of Saxony, Frederick the Wise and his successor John Frederick. Immediately after the publication of the ban against Luther, Elector Frederick, fearing violence, had hidden him in the castle of the Wartburg, where Luther busied himself translating the New Testament. He had left his retreat, his "Patmos" as he called it, at the risk of his life to quell the anarchy in Wittenberg and the surrounding country caused by some fanatical image-breakers who had covered themselves with the name of the reformer. Elector Frederick warned Luther that Duke George was ready to seize him, but Luther replied that he would go to Wittenberg to protect the honour of his cause if it rained Duke Georges for nine days. His masterly presence and wise words soon brought order again into the social chaos caused by the fanatics.

The year 1525 was perhaps the most eventful one for Luther after the audience at Worms. In that year his true friend and defender, the Elector Frederick died. In that year, too, he married Katharina von Bora, who had been a nun in a Cistercian convent, he himself having laid aside

the monk's cowl the year before. His delightful home life, relieved by the high pleasures of music and generous hospitality, remains one of the happiest pictures in the history of German morals. Of more moment still in Luther's life was the change of spirit wrought in him by the outbreak and rapid cause of the Peasants' War in 1525. He saw that his doctrine threatened to become the battle-cry of the malcontents of every sort, a shibboleth for religious fanatics and revolutionary adventurers. The time had come to defend the reformed faith against its would-be patrons and real abusers. From this time on Luther's chief work was not so much to labour for the recognition of the new faith and worship, as to order and establish its doctrines and observances on a firm, lasting basis. So he ordained the liturgy and organized the visitations of the reformed churches, wrote catechisms and hymns, translated the Old Testament to complete his version of the entire Bible, and all the while lectured to his growing classes, preached, and maintained a copious correspondence with his helpers throughout the ever-widening circle of Protestant influence. Before his death the reformed faith had spread over Wurtemburg and Bavaria, Pomerania, Denmark, Livonia, Prussia, Sweden, and Norway; while the Anglican Reformation and the work of Calvin in Geneva—

both inspired in large part directly by Luther's writings — were well under way.

It would be interesting to follow the relation of Luther's doctrines to the political vicissitudes of Germany during the twenty-five years following the day of Worms, but an entire essay would scarcely suffice to do such a topic justice. We can only pause for a moment at the year 1530, when Charles, during a lull in the French wars, for the second time visited his German lands and held his diet in great pomp at Augsburg in Bavaria. He had returned after nine years to enforce the edict of Worms and crush the Lutheran heresy, but instead of one poor theological professor to silence, he found now the five princes of Saxony, Hesse, Brandenburg, Anhalt, and Lüneburg, together with fourteen free cities of the realm bound solemnly to protect with life and limb the reformed doctrines. These princes and powers had formerly protested the year before at Spires, against the enforcement of the edict of Worms in their territories, and had thereby earned the name of *Protestants*.

The emperor's eyes were opened to the serious consequences of his hasty sacrifice of German sentiment at Worms nine years before. He had failed by threatening, and now he tried cajoling the Protestants into submission. He invited his subjects' "convictions, opinions, and views for the

benefit of Christian truth." But the invitation was only a farce. Melanchthon, the scholar of the Reformation, drew up a statement of the reformed faith — the classic Augsburg Confession, still the main symbol of Lutheranism. Of course the Catholic divines drew up a successful refutatation of the Confession, and in spite of all Melanchthon's efforts for a compromise, which Luther from his retreat in Coburg feared would go so far as to sacrifice the Protestant cause, the reformed doctrine was condemned, and the Protestants were given till April, 1531, to renounce their allegiance to Luther's cause.

It was a declaration of war by the emperor against his own subjects. Again Charles preferred to leave a divided land behind him, and go to fight his interminable wars with Francis for the possession of the whole borderland between France and Germany, from the North Sea to the Alps. Fifteen years later (1546) he returned to Germany again to fight the war against the Lutherans which he had declared in 1531. Francis of France was dead, and Charles was left free to punish the rebellious Protestants. But again the Reformation had made rapid progress in Germany; even the successor of the implacable Duke George, who had "wagged his head" at the Pleissenburg in 1519, had gone over to the Lutheran camp. The Protestant

princes were bound together in the Schmalkaldic League. The war was opened by the victory of the Imperial troops at Mühlberg, April 24, 1547, but it did not close then. For a hundred years the land of Germany was devastated by religious strife. And when at the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648, toleration was won for the Protestant faith, it was a divided, desolated, decimated Germany that had inherited the blessing. Not till the crowning of William I at Versailles in 1871 did Germany again become a united nation — and not till the present generation has she fully recovered from the economic damages of the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Luther did not live to see the outbreak of the Schmalkaldic War. He died peacefully in Eisleben, the village of his birth, on the 18th of February, 1546.

V

We have coupled Luther's name with the Dawn of the Modern Age in the title of this essay. Not that Luther saw the dawn of the Modern Age himself. Generations of social and religious bondage had yet to pass before the blessings of democracy and individual liberty of thought and speech were to be granted to any share of the peoples of Europe; and the

man whose name opens the list of modern philosophers, Réné Descartes, was not born till fifty years after Luther was buried. Luther's world was still a world of angels and devils; of miracles, incantations, and signs; of rough men who called each other rough names. To read Luther's "Table Talk" one would say that he was as well acquainted with Satan as with any of his colleagues at the university. One may still hunt on the walls of the Ritterhaus for traces of the spot made by Luther when he hurled his inkwell at the Devil — a very significant deed, when viewed as the symbol of the power of ink in exorcising the evil spirits of ignorance and superstition.

But besides the light accusation of sharing some of the weaknesses of his age, I fear that we shall have to admit that Luther is obnoxious to the graver charge of not appreciating all the elements of strength in his age. Despite his great learning he had little sense for the culture and refinement of the Renaissance, as embodied, for example, in such men as Erasmus, Colet, and More. He was grossly intolerant and unjust to his fellow-reformer Zwingli, who differed from him on a fine point in the interpretation of the Lord's Supper. He was inconsistent in his adherence to the letter of Scripture, and he was Jesuitical in his public condonation of the biga-

mous marriage of the foremost of the Protestant princes, Philip Landgrave of Hesse.

For all that, when measured against his merits, these faults appear only as slight blemishes on the splendid soul of the man. For Luther's service to mankind was nothing less than the successful declaration of individual freedom of conscience from the dictates of any human authority. He broke the power of the mediæval papal Church, single handed, with the weapon of a clear conscience. Specific acts of the Church had been reprehended, certain doctrines of the Church had been questioned, various men of the Church had been abhorred, long before Luther's day; but the great millennial institution, with its boast of divine foundation and apostolic pillars, had not been challenged in its whole theory and practice. Luther was the first to get outside the mediæval Church and see it in perspective. He weighed its doctrines against reason and conscience. In all his public or private arguments, whether with Cajetan at Augsburg, or Eck at Leipzig, or Miltitz at Altenburg, or even the emperor himself at Worms, Luther invariably put the burden of proof on the Church. For the rest of Christendom the task of the apologist was to prove that he was in agreement with the doctrines of the Church; for Luther it was to summon the

Church to prove its doctrines in agreement with an enlightened mind and an honest conscience. And just in that difference of the conception of conscience and authority lies the whole history of the development of the spirit of the modern age in its threefold aspect of religious, intellectual, and industrial freedom. So may we justly hail Martin Luther, though far removed from us, as one of the most powerful of the prophets of the Modern Age. He called into being and controlled through thirty years, until his death, "the most tremendous revolution western Europe has ever seen." John Knox and William the Silent, Oliver Cromwell and the Pilgrim Fathers, Frederick of Prussia, Rousseau, Mirabeau, and Immanuel Kant all have Luther to their father.

And so do we have Luther to our father, but not to boast of that glory as the sons of Abraham once did, nor to rest content with what light he saw. We do but poorly honour our heroes by repeating their words or celebrating their deeds. Progress was the blessing for which they gave their lives — religious, intellectual, social progress. And we know, when we are honest with ourselves, that there is no progress in the celebration of historic events or the laudation and worship of historic heroes; but only in the application of principles — the

principles of virtue, diligence, veracity, courage, and freedom. Jeremiah and Jesus, Socrates and Martin Luther, and the countless lesser spiritual heroes of the world have taught us these principles. Let us spend a moment celebrating the heroes, and a lifetime practising the principles.

To the unheroic and the unfree, to the gross-minded and frivolous, hero-worship is still, and probably will be for generations to come, idolatry of a name, or worse still of a dogma. But the more we come to study and appreciate these great souls that have lived for us, the more we realize that personal adoration or slavish adherence to the letter of their doctrine is the last thing they wished or would wish of men. They lived neither to get themselves worshipped nor to get a creed established; but they lived and toiled and died to nurture in man a new principle of life, which should be fertile in producing virtue, strength, and peace. They came, in the words of the greatest of them all, that we "might have life, and have it more abundantly." And when men shall at last have come to realize that the life of spiritual earnestness and simple truth is a greater blessing than any of the passing accidents or accessories of life; when they shall at last have the eye open to majestic presences and the ear attuned to grave harmonies; when they shall rise in their spiritual

dignity and clothe themselves in the garments of immortality; and, entering into their birthright as sons of God, shall live in humble, triumphant communion with that

> . . . "Living will that shall endure
> When all that seems shall suffer shock;"

then shall the spiritual heroes of this world see of the travail of their soul, and shall be satisfied.